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THE GOLDEN BUTTERFLY.

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THE

GOLDEN BUTTERFLY.

A Novel.

BY THE AUTHORS OF

'READY-MONEY MORTIBOY,' 'THIS SON OF VULCAN,' 'MY LITTLE GIRL,' 'WITH HARP AND CROWN,' 'THE CASE OF MR. LUCRAFT,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE

GOLDEN BUTTERFLY.

Prologue.

I.

'What do you think, chief?'

The speaker, who was leading by half a length, turned in his saddle and looked at his companion.

'Push on,' growled the chief, who was a man of few words.

'If you were not so intolerably conceited about the value of your words—hang it, man, you are not the Poet Laureate!—you might give your reasons why we should not camp where we are. The sun will be down in two hours; the way is long, the wind is cold, or will be soon. This pilgrim has tightened his belt to stave off the gnawing at his stomach; here is running water, here is wood, here

is everything calculated to charm the poetic mind even of Captain Ladds—'

'Road!' interrupted his fellow-traveller, pointing along the track marked more by deep old wheel-ruts, grown over with grass, than by any evidences of engineering skill. 'Roads lead to places; places have beds; beds are warmer than grass—no rattle-snakes in beds; miners in hotels—amusing fellows, miners.'

'If ever I go out again after buffaloes, or bear, or mountain-deer, or any other game whatever which this great continent offers, with a monosyllabic man, may I be condemned to another two months of buffalo steak without Worcester sauce, such as I have had already; may I be poisoned with bad Bourbon whisky; may I never again see the sweet shady side of Pall Mall; may I—'

Here he stopped suddenly, for want of imagination to complete the curse.

The first speaker was a young man of four-and-twenty—the age which is to my sex what eighteen is to the other, because at four-and-twenty youth and manhood meet. He of four-and-twenty is yet a youth, inasmuch as women are still angels, every dinner is a feast, every man of higher rank is a demigod, and every book is true. He is a man, inasmuch as

he has the firm step of manhood, he has passed through his calf-love, he knows what claret means, and his heart is set upon the things of which boys care nothing. He is a youth, because he can still play a game of football and rejoice amazingly in a boat-race; he is a man, because he knows that these things belong to the past, and that to concern oneself seriously with athletics when you can no longer be an athlete in the games is to put yourself on the level of a rowing coach or the athletic critic of a sporting-paper.

Being only four-and-twenty, the speaker was in high spirits. He was also hungry. He was always both. What has life better to offer than a continual flow of animal spirits and a perpetual appetite? He was a tall, slight, and perhaps rather a weedy youth, a little too long of leg, a little too narrow in the beam, a little spare about the shoulders; but a youth of a ruddy and a cheerful countenance. To say that the lines of his face were never set to gravity would be too much, because I defy any man to laugh when he is sleeping, eating, or drinking. At all other times this young man was ready to laugh without stopping. Not a foolish cackle of idiotic vacuity such as may be heard in Earlswood Asylum, or at a tea-party to meet the curate; but a cheerful bubble of mirth and

good-humour, proof that the spirit within took everything joyously, seeing in every misadventure its humorous side, and in every privation its absurdity.

The other who rode beside him was some years older at least. A man of thirty-five, or perhaps more; a man with a hatchet-face—nose and forehead in one straight line; long chin and long upper lip in another; face red with health as well as bronzed with the sun; a good honest face, supernaturally grave, grave beyond all understanding; lips that were always tightly closed; eyes which sometimes sparkled in response to some genial thought, or bubbled over at some joke of his companion, but which as a rule were like gimlets for sternness, so that strangers, especially stranger servants—the nigger of Jamaica, the guileless Hindoo of his Indian station, and other members of the inferior human brotherhood—trembled exceedingly when they met those eyes. Captain Ladds was accordingly well served, as cold reserved men generally are. Mankind take everything unknown *pro terribili*, for something dreadful, and until we learn to know a man, and think we know him, he is to be treated with the respect due to a possible enemy. *Hostis* means a stranger, and it is for strangers that we keep our brickbats.

People who knew Ladds laughed at this reputation. They said the gallant captain was a humbug; they pretended that he was as gentle as a turtle-dove; beneath those keen eyes, they said, and behind that sharp hatchet-face lurked the most amiable of dispositions. At any rate, Ladds was never known to thrash a native servant, or to swear more than is becoming and needful at a syce, while his hatchet-face had been more than once detected in the very act of looking as soft and tender as a young mother's over her first-born. The name of this cavalier was short and simple. It was Thomas Ladds. His intimate friends called him Tommy.

They were in California, and were not buffalo-hunting now, because there is not a buffalo within five hundred miles of Sacramento. Their buffalo-hunting was over, having been accompanied by such small hardships as have been already alluded to. They rode along a track which was as much like a road as Richmond Park is like the Forest of Arden. They were mounted on a pair of small nervous mustangs; their saddles were the Mexican saddles used in the country, in front of which was the never-failing horn. Round this was wound the horsehair lariette, which serves the Western Nimrod for lassoing by day and for keeping off snakes at night, no

snake having ever been known to cross this barrier of bristly horsehair. You might as well expect a burgling coolie, smeared with oil, and naked, to effect his escape by crawling through a hedge of prickly pear. Also, because they were in a foreign land, and wished to be in harmony with its institutions, they wore immense steel spurs, inlaid with silver filigree, and furnished with 'lobs' attached to them, which jangled and danced to make melody, just as if they formed part of an illustration to a Christmas book. Boots, of course, they wore, and the artistic instinct which, a year before, had converted the younger man into a thing of beauty and a joy for the whole Park in the afternoon, now impelled him to assume a *cummerbund* of scarlet silk, with white-tasselled fringes, the like of which, perhaps, had never before been seen on the back of Californian mustang. His companion was less ornate in his personal appearance. Both men carried guns, and if a search had been made, a revolver would have been found, either hidden in the belt of each or carried *perdu* in the trousers-pocket. In these days of Pacific Railways and scampering Globe Trotters, one does not want to parade the revolver; but there are dark places on the earth, from the traveller's as well as from the missionary's point of view, where

it would be well to have both bowie and Derringer ready to hand. On the American continent the wandering lamb sometimes has to lie down with the leopard, the harmless gazelle to journey side by side with the cheetah, and the asp may here and there pretend to play innocently over the hole of the cockatrice.

Behind the leaders followed a little troop of three, consisting of one English servant and two 'greasers.' The latter were dressed in plain unpretending costume of flannel shirt, boots, and rough trousers. Behind each hung his rifle. The English servant was dressed like his master, but 'more so;' his spurs being heavier, the pattern of his check-shirt being larger, his saddle bigger; only for the silk cummerbund he wore a leathern strap, the last symbol of the honourable condition of dependence. He rode in advance of the greasers, whom he held in contempt, and some thirty yards behind the leaders. The Mexicans rode in silence, smoking cigarettes perpetually. Sometimes they looked to their guns, or they told a story, or one would sing the snatch of a song in a low voice; mostly they were grave and thoughtful, though what a greaser thinks about has never yet been ascertained.

The country was so far in the Far West that the

Sierra Nevada lay to the east. It was a rich and beautiful country: there were park-like tracts—supposing the park to be of a primitive and early-settlement kind—stretching out to the left. These were dotted with white oaks. To the right rose the sloping sides of a hill, which were covered with the brushwood called the chaparelle, in which grew the manzanita and the scrub-oak, with an occasional cedar-pine, not in the least like the cedars of Lebanon and Clapham Common. Hanging about in the jungle, or stretching its arms along the side of the dry watercourse which ran at the travellers' feet beside the road, was the wild vine, loaded with its small and pretty grapes, now ripe. Nature in inventing the wild grape has been as generous as in her gift of the sloe. It is a fruit of which an American once observed that it was calculated to develop the generosity of a man's nature, 'because,' he explained, 'you would rather give it to your neighbour than eat it yourself.'

The travellers were low down on the western slopes of the Sierra; they were in the midst of dales and glades—cañons and gulches, of perfect loveliness, shut in by mountains which rose over and behind them like friendly giants guarding a troop of sleeping maidens. Pelion was piled on Ossa as peak

after peak rose higher, all clad with pine and cedar, receding farther and farther, till peaks became points and ridges became sharp edges.

It was autumn, and there were dry beds which had in the spring been rivulets flowing full and clear from the snowy sides of the higher slopes, yet among them lingered the flowers of April upon the shrubs, and the colours of the fading leaves mingled with the hues of the autumn berries.

A sudden turn in the winding road brought the foremost riders upon a change in the appearance of the country. Below them to the left stretched a broad open space, where the ground had been not only cleared of whatever jungle once grew upon it, but also turned over. They looked upon the site of one of the earliest surface-mining grounds. The shingle and gravel stood about in heaps; the gulleys and ditches formed by the miners ran up and down the face of the country like the wrinkles in the cheek of a baby monkey; old pits, not deep enough to kill, but warranted to maim and disable, lurked like man-traps in the open; the old wooden aqueducts run up by the miners in the year 'fifty-two were still standing where they were abandoned by the 'pioneers;' here and there lay about old washing-pans rusty and broken, old cradles and bits of rusty metal which

had once belonged to shovels. These relics and signs of bygone gatherings of men were sufficiently dreary in themselves, but at intervals there stood the ruins of a log-house or a heap which had once been a cottage built of mud. Palestine itself has no more striking picture of desolation and wreck than a deserted surface-mine.

They drew rein and looked in silence. Presently they became aware of the presence of life. Right in the foreground, about two hundred yards before them, there advanced a procession of two. The leader of the show, so to speak, was a man. He was running. He was running so hard, that anybody could see his primary object was speed. After him, with heavy stride, seeming to be in no kind of hurry, and yet covering the ground at a much greater rate than the man, there came a bear—a real old grisly. A bear who was 'shadowing' the man and meant claws. A bear who had an insult to avenge, and was resolved to go on with the affair until he had avenged it. A bear, too, who had his enemy in the open, where there was nothing to stop him, and no refuge for his victim but the planks of a ruined log-house, could he find one.

Both men without a word got their rifles ready. The younger threw the reins of his horse to his companion and dismounted.

Then he stood still and watched.

The most exhilarating thing in the whole world is allowed to be a hunt. No greater pleasure in life than that of the Shekarry, especially if he be after big game. On this occasion the keenness of the sport was perhaps intensified to him who ran by the reflection that the customary position of things was reversed. No longer did he hunt the bear; the bear hunted *him*. No longer did he warily follow up the game; the game boldly followed *him*. No joyous sound of horns cheered on the hunter; no shout, such as those which inspirit the fox and put fresh vigour into the hare; not even the short eager bark of the hounds, at the sound of which Reynard begins to think how many of his hundred turns are left. It was a silent chase. The bear, who represented in himself the whole field — men in scarlet, ladies, master, pack, and everything—set to work in a cold unsympathetic way, infinitely more distressing to a nervous creature than the cheerful ringing of a whole field. To hunt in silence would be hard for any man; to be hunted in silence is intolerable.

Grisly held his head down and wagged it from side to side, while his great silent paws rapidly cleared the ground and lessened the distance.

'Tommy,' whispered the young fellow, 'I can cover him now.'

'Wait, Jack. Don't miss. Give Grisly two minutes more. Gad! how the fellow scuds!'

Tommy, you see, obeyed the instinct of nature. He loved the hunt: if not to hunt actively, to witness a hunt. It is the same feeling which crowds the benches at a bull-fight in Spain. It was the same feeling which lit up the faces in the Coliseum when Hermann, formerly of the Danube, prisoner, taken red-handed in revolt, and therefore *moriturus*, performed with vigour, sympathy, and spirit the *rôle* of Actæon, ending, as we all know, in a splendid chase by bloodhounds; after which the poor Teuton, maddened by his long flight and exhausted by his desperate resistance, was torn to pieces, fighting to the end with a rage past all acting. It is our modern pleasure to read of pain and suffering. Those were the really pleasant days to the Roman ladies when they actually witnessed living agony.

'Give Grisly two minutes,' said Captain Ladds.

By this time the rest of the party had come up, and were watching the movements of the man and bear. In the plain stood the framework of a ruined wooden house. Man made for log-house. Bear, without any apparent effort, but just to show that he

saw the dodge, and meant that it should not succeed, put on a spurt, and the distance between them lessened every moment. Fifty yards; forty yards. Man looked round over his shoulder. The log-house was a good two hundred yards ahead. He hesitated; seemed to stop for a moment. Bear diminishing the space by a good dozen yards—and then man doubled.

'Getting pumped,' said Ladds the critical. Then he too dismounted, and stood beside the younger man, giving the reins of both horses to one of the Mexicans. 'Mustn't let Grisly claw the poor devil,' he murmured.

'Let me bring him down, Tommy.'

'Bring him down, young un.'

The greasers looked on and laughed. It would have been to them a pleasant termination to the 'play' had Bruin clawed the man. Neither hunter nor quarry saw the party clustered together on the rising ground on which the track ran. Man saw nothing but the ground over which he flew; bear saw nothing but man before him. The doubling manœuvre was, however, the one thing needed to bring Grisly within easy reach. Faster flew the man, but it was the last flight of despair; had the others been near enough they would have seen the

cold drops of agony standing on his forehead; they would have caught his panting breath, they would have heard his muttered prayer.

'Let him have it!' growled Ladds.

It was time. Grisly, swinging along with leisurely step, rolling his great head from side to side in time with the cadence of his footfall—one roll to every half-dozen strides, like a fat German over a *trois-temps* waltz — suddenly lifted his face, and roared. Then the man shrieked; then the bear stopped, and raised himself for a moment, pawing in the air; then he dropped again, and rushed with quickened step upon his foe; then—but then—ping! one shot. It has struck Grisly in the shoulder; he stops, with a roar.

'Good, young un!' said Ladds, bringing piece to shoulder. This time Grisly roars no more. He rolls over. He is shot to the heart, and is dead.

The other participator in this *chasse* of two heard the crack of the rifles. His senses were growing dazed with fear; he did not stop, he ran on still, but with trembling knees and outstretched hands; and when he came to a heap of shingle and sand—one of those left over from the old surface-mines—he fell headlong on the pile with a cry, and could not rise. The two who shot the bear ran across the

ground—he lay almost at their feet—to secure their prey. After them, at a leisurely pace, strode John, the servant. The greasers stayed behind and laughed.

'Grisly's dead,' said Tommy, pulling out his knife. 'Steak?'

'No; skin,' cried the younger. 'Let me take his skin. John, we will have the beast skinned. You can get some steaks cut. Where is the man?'

They found him lying on his face, unable to move.

'Now, old man,' said the young fellow cheerfully, 'might as well sit up, you know, if you can't stand. Bruin's gone to the happy hunting-grounds.'

The man sat up, as desired, and tried to take a comprehensive view of the position.

Jack handed him a flask, from which he took a long pull. Then he got up, and somewhat ostentatiously began to smooth down the legs of his trousers.

He was a thin man, about five-and-forty years of age; he wore an irregular and patchy kind of beard, which flourished exceedingly on certain square half-inches of chin and cheek, and was as thin as grass at Aden on the intervening spaces. He had no boots, but a sort of moccasins, the lightness of

which enabled him to show his heels to the bear for so long a time. His trousers might have been of a rough tweed, or they might have been black cloth, because grease, many drenchings, the buffeting of years, and the holes into which they were worn, had long deprived them of their original colour and brilliancy. Above the trousers he wore a tattered flannel shirt, the right arm of which, nearly torn to pieces, revealed a tattooed limb, which was strong although thin; the buttons had long ago vanished from the front of the garment; thorns picturesquely replaced them. He wore a red-cotton handkerchief round his neck, a round felt hat was on his head; this, like the trousers, had lost its pristine colour, and by dint of years and weather its stiffness too. To prevent the hat from flapping in his eyes, its possessor had pinned it up with thorns in the front.

Necessity is the mother of invention: there is nothing morally wrong in the use of thorns where other men use studs, diamond pins, and such gauds; and the effect is picturesque. The stranger, in fact, was a law unto himself. He had no coat; the rifle of Californian civilisation was missing; there was no sign of knife or revolver; and the only encumbrance, if that was any, to the lightness of his flight

was a small wooden box strapped round tightly, and hanging at his back by means of a steel chain, grown a little rusty where it did not rub against his neck and shoulders.

He sat up and winked involuntarily with both eyes. This was the effect of present bewilderment and late fear.

Then he looked round him, after, as before explained, a few moments of assiduous leg-smoothing, which, as stated above, looked ostentatious, but was really only nervous agitation. Then he rose, and saw Grisly lying in a heap a few yards off. He walked over with a grave face, and looked at him.

When Henri Balafré, Duc de Guise, saw Coligny lying dead at his feet, he is said—only it is a wicked lie—to have kicked the body of his murdered father's enemy. When Henri III. of France, ten years later, saw Balafré dead at his feet, he did kick the lifeless body, with a wretched joke. That king was a cur. My American was not. He stood over Bruin with a look in his eyes which betokened respect for fallen greatness and sympathy with bad luck. Grisly would have been his victor but for the chance which brought him within reach of a friendly rifle.

'A near thing,' he said. 'Since I've been in

this doggoned country I've had one or two near things, but this was the nearest.'

The greasers stood round the body of the bear, and the English servant was giving directions for skinning the beast.

'And which of you gentlemen,' he went on with a nasal twang more pronounced than before—perhaps with more emphasis on the word 'gentlemen' than was altogether required—'which of you gentlemen was good enough to shoot the critter?'

The English servant, who was, like his master Captain Ladds, a man of few words, pointed to the young man, who stood close by with the other leader of the expedition.

The man snatched from the jaws of death took off his shaky thorn-beset felt, and solemnly held out his hand.

'Sir,' he said, 'I do not know your name, and you do not know mine. If you did you would not be much happier, because it is not a striking name. If you'll oblige me, sir, by touching that'—he meant his right hand—'we shall be brothers. All that's mine shall be yours. I do not ask you, sir, to reciprocate. All that's mine, sir, when I get anything, shall be yours. At present, sir, there is nothing; but I've luck behind me. Shake hands, sir. Once

a mouse helped a lion, sir. It's in a book. I am the mouse, sir, and you are the lion. Sir, my name is Gilead P. Beck.'

The young man laughed and shook hands with him.

'I only fired the first shot,' he explained. 'My friend here—'

'No; first shot disabled—hunt finished then—Grisly out of the running. Glad you're not clawed—unpleasant to be clawed. Young un did it. No thanks. Tell us where we are.'

Mr. Gilead P. Beck, catching the spirit of the situation, told them where they were, approximately. 'This,' he said, 'is Patrick's Camp; at least, it was. The Pioneers of '49 could tell you a good deal about Patrick's Camp. It was here that Patrick kept his store. In those old days—they're gone now—if a man wanted to buy a blanket, that article, sir, was put into one scale, and weighed down with gold-dust in the other. Same with a pair of boots; same with a pound of raisins. Patrick might have died rich, sir, but he didn't—none of the pioneers did—so he died poor; and died in his boots too, like most of the lot.'

'Not much left of the camp.'

'No, sir, not much. The mine gave out. Then

they moved up the hills, where, I conclude, you gentlemen are on your way. Prospecting likely. The new town, called Empire City, ought to be an hour or so up the track. I was trying to find my way there when I met with old Grisly. Perhaps if I had let him alone he would have let me alone. But I blazed at him, and, sir, I missed him; then he shadowed me. And the old rifle's gone at last.'

'How long did the chase last?'

'I should say, sir, forty days and forty nights, or near about. And you gentlemen air going to Empire City?'

'We are going anywhere. Perhaps, for the present, you had better join us.'

II.

Mr. Gilead P. Beck, partly recovered from the shock caused to his nerves by the revengeful spirit of the bear, and in no way discomfited by any sense of false shame as to his ragged appearance, marched beside the two Englishmen. It was characteristic of his nationality that he regarded the greasers with contempt, and that he joined the two gentlemen as if he belonged to their grade and social rank. An Englishman picked up in such rags and duds would have shrunk abashed to the rear, or he would have apologised for his tattered condition, or he would have begged for some garments—any garments—to replace his own. Mr. Beck had no such feeling. He strode along with a swinging slouch, which covered the ground as rapidly as the step of the horses. The wind blew his rags about his long and lean figure as picturesquely as if he were another Autolycus. He was as full of talk as that worthy, and as lightsome of spirit, despite the solemn gravity of his face. I once saw a poem—I think in the

Spectator—on Artemus Ward, in which the bard apostrophised the light-hearted merriment of the Western American: a very unfortunate thing to say, because the Western American is externally a most serious person, never merry, never witty, but always humorous. Mr. Beck was quite grave, though at the moment as happy as that other grave and thoughtful person who has made a name in the literature of humour—Panurge—when he escaped half-roasted from the Turk's Serai.

'I ought,' he said, 'to sit down and cry, like the girl on the prairie.'

'Why ought you to cry?'

'I guess I ought to cry because I've lost my rifle and everything except my Luck'—here he pulled at the steel chain—'in that darned long stern chase.'

'You can easily get a new rifle,' said Jack.

'With dollars,' interrupted Mr. Beck. 'As for them, there's not a dollar left—nary a red cent; only my Luck.'

'And what is your Luck?'

'That,' said Mr. Beck, 'I will tell you by and by. Perhaps it's your Luck too, young boss,' he added, thinking of a shot as fortunate to himself as William Tell's was to his son.

He pulled the box attached to the steel chain

round to the front, and looked at it tenderly. It was safe, and he heaved a sigh.

The way wound up a valley—a road marked only, as has been said, by deep ruts along its course. Behind the travellers the evening sun was slowly sinking in the west; before them the peaks of the Sierra lifted their heads, coloured purple in the evening light; and on either hand rose the hill-sides, with their dark foliage in alternate 'splashes' of golden light and deepest shade.

It wanted but a quarter of an hour of sunset when Mr. Gilead P. Beck pointed to a township which suddenly appeared, lying at their very feet.

'Empire City, I reckon.'

A good-sized town of wooden houses. They were all alike, and of the same build as that affected by the architects of dolls' houses; that is to say, they were of one story only, had a door in the middle, and a window on either side. They were so small also, that they looked veritable dolls' houses.

There were one or two among them of more pretentious appearance, and of several stories. These were the hotels, billiard-saloons, bars, and gambling-houses.

'It's a place bound to advance, sir,' said Mr. Beck proudly. 'Empire City, when I first saw it,

which is two years ago, was only two years old. It is only in our country that a great city springs up in in a day. Empire City will be the Chicago of the West.'

'I see a city,' said Captain Ladds; 'can't see the people.'

It was certainly curious. There was not a soul in the streets; there was no smoke from the chimneys; there were neither carts nor horses; there was not the least sign of occupation.

Mr. Gilead P. Beck whistled.

'All gone,' he said. 'Guess the city's busted up.'

He pushed aside the brambles which grew over what had been a path leading to the place, and hurried down. The others followed him, and rode into the town.

It was deserted. The doors of the houses were open, and if you looked in you might see the rough furniture which the late occupants disdained to carry away with them. The two Englishmen dismounted, gave their reins to the servants, and began to look about them.

The descendants of Og, king of Bashan, have left their houses in black basalt, dotted about the lava-fields of the Hauran, to witness how they lived. In

the outposts of the desert stations of the East the Roman soldiers have left their barracks and their baths, their jokes written on the wall, and their names, to show how they passed away the weary hours of garrison duty. So the miners who founded Empire City, and deserted it *en masse* when the gold gave out, left behind them marks by which future explorers of the ruins should know what manner of men once dwelt there. The billiard-saloon stood open, with swinging-doors; the table was still there; the balls lay about on the table and the floor; the cues stood in the rack; the green cloth, mildewed, covered the table.

'Tommy,' said the younger, 'we will have a game to-night.'

The largest building in the place had been an hotel. It had two stories, and was, like the rest of the houses, built of wood, with a verandah along the front. The upper story looked as if it had been recently inhabited; that is, the shutters were not dropping off the hinges, nor were they flapping to and fro in the breeze.

But the town was deserted; the evening breeze blew chilly up its vacant streets; life and sound had gone out of the place.

'I feel cold,' said Jack, looking about him.

They went round to the back of the hotel. Old iron cog-wheels lay rusting on the ground with remains of pumps. In the heart of the town behind the hotel stretched an open space of ground covered with piles of shingle and intersected with ditches.

Mr. Beck sat down and adjusted one of the thorns which served as a temporary shirt-stud.

'Two years ago,' he said, 'there was ten thousand miners here; now there isn't one. I thought we should find a choice hotel, with a little monty or poker afterwards. Now no one left; nothing but a Chinaman or two.'

'How do you know there are Chinamen?'

'See those stones?'

He pointed to some great boulders, from three to six feet in diameter. Some operation of a mystical kind had been performed upon them, for they were jagged and chipped as if they had been filed and cut into shape by a sculptor who had been once a dentist and still loved the profession.

'The miners picked the bones of those rocks, but they never pick quite clean. Then the Chinamen come and finish off. Gentlemen, it's a special Providence that you picked me up. I don't altogether admire the way in which that special Providence was

played up to in the matter of the Bar; but a Christian without a revolver alone among twenty Chinamen—'

He stopped and shrugged his shoulders.

'They'd have got my Luck,' he concluded.

'Chief, I don't like it,' said the younger man. 'It's ghostly. It's a town of dead men. As soon as it is dark the ghosts will rise and walk about—play billiards, I expect. What shall we do?'

'Hotel,' growled the chief. 'Sleep on floor—sit on chairs—eat off a table.'

They entered the hotel.

A most orderly bar: the glasses there; the bright-coloured bottles; two or three casks of Bourbon whisky; the counter; the very dice on the counter with which the bar-keeper used to 'go' the miners for drinks. How things at once so necessary to civilised life and so portable as dice were left behind it is impossible to explain.

Everything was there except the drink. The greasers tried the casks and examined the bottles. Emptiness. A miner may leave behind him the impedimenta, but the real necessaries of life—rifle, revolver, bowie, and cards—he takes with him. And as for the drink, he carries that away too, for greater safety, inside himself.

The English servant looked round him and smiled superior.

'No tap for beer, as usual, sir,' he said. 'These pore Californians has much to learn.'

Mr. Gilead P. Beck looked round mournfully.

'Everything gone but the fixins,' he sighed. 'There used to be good beds, where there wasn't more'n two at once in them; and there used to be such a crowd around this bar as you would not find nearer'n St. Louis City.'

'Hush!' said Jack, holding up his hand. There were steps.

Mr. Beck pricked up his ears.

'Chinamen, likely. If there's a row, gentlemen, give me something, if it's only a toothpick, to chime in with. But that's not a Chinese step; that's an Englishman's. He wears boots, but they are not miner's boots; he walks firm and slow, like all Englishmen; he is not in a hurry, like our folk. And who but an Englishman would be found staying behind in the Empire City when it's gone to pot?'

The footsteps came down the stairs.

'Most unhandsome of a ghost,' said the younger man, 'to walk before midnight.'

The producer of the footsteps appeared.

'Told you he was an Englishman,' cried Mr. Beck.

Indeed there was no mistaking the nationality of the man, in spite of his dress, which was cosmopolitan. He wore boots, but not, as the quick ear of the American told him, the great boots of the miner; he had on a flannel shirt with a red-silk belt; he wore a sort of blanket thrown back from his shoulders; and he had a broad felt hat. Of course he carried arms, but they were not visible.

He was a man of middle height, with clear blue eyes; the perfect complexion of an Englishman of good stock and in complete health; a brown beard, long and rather curly, streaked with here and there a gray hair; square and clear-cut nostrils; and a mouth which, though not much of it was visible, looked as if it would easily smile, might readily become tender, and would certainly find it difficult to be stern. He might be any age from five-and-thirty to five-and-forty.

The greasers fell back and grouped about the door. The questions which might be raised had no interest for them. The two leaders stood together; and Mr. Gilead P. Beck, rolling an empty keg to their side, turned it up, and sat down with the air of a judge, looking from one party to the other.

'Englishmen, I see,' said the stranger.

'Ye-yes,' said Ladds, not, as Mr. Beck expected,

immediately holding out his hand for the stranger to grasp.

'You have probably lost your way?'

'Been hunting. Working round—San Francisco. Followed track; accident; got here. Your hotel, perhaps? Fine situation, but lonely.'

'Not a ghost, then,' murmured the other, with a look of temporary disappointment.

'If you will come up-stairs to my quarters, I may be able to make you comfortable for the night. Your party will accommodate themselves without our help.'

He referred to the greasers, who had already begun their preparations for spending a happy night. When he led the way up the stairs, he was followed, not only by the two gentlemen he had invited, but also by the ragamuffin hunter, miner, or adventurer, and by the valet, who conceived it his duty to follow his master.

He lived, this hermit, in one of the small bedrooms of the hotel, which he had converted into a sitting-room. It contained a single rocking-chair and a table. There was also a shelf, which served for a sideboard, and a curtain under the shelf, which acted as a cupboard.

'You see my den,' he said. 'I came here a year

or so ago by accident, like yourselves. I found the place deserted. I liked the solitude, the scenery, whatever you like, and I stayed here. You are the only visitors I have had for a year.'

'Chinamen?' said Mr. Gilead P. Beck.

'Well, Chinamen, of course. But only two of them. They take turns, at forty dollars a month, to cook my dinners. And there is a half-caste, who does not mind running down to Sacramento when I want anything. And so, you see, I make out pretty well.'

He opened the window, and blew a whistle.

In two minutes a Chinaman came tumbling up the stairs. His inscrutable face expressed all the conflicting passions of humanity at once—ambition, vanity, self-respect, humour, satire, avarice, resignation, patience, revenge, meekness, long-suffering, remembrance, and a thousand others. No Aryan comes within a hundred miles of it.

'Dinner as soon as you can,' said his master.

'Ayah! can do,' replied the Celestial. 'What time you wantchee?'

'As soon as you can. Half an hour.'

'Can do. My no have got cully-powder. Have makee finish. Have got?'

'Look for some; make Achow help.'

'How can? No, b'long his pidgin. He no helpee. B'long my pidgin makee cook chow-chow. Ayah! Achow have go makee cheat over Mexican man. Makee play cards all same euchre.'

In fact, on looking out of the window, the other Celestial was clearly visible, manipulating a pack of cards and apparently inviting the Mexicans to a friendly game, in which there could be no deception.

Then Ladds' conscience smote him.

'Beg pardon. Should have seen. Made remark about hotel. Apologise.'

'He means,' said the other, 'that he was a terrible great fool not to see that you are a gentleman.'

Ladds nodded.

'Let me introduce our party,' the speaker went on. 'This is our esteemed friend Mr. Gilead P. Beck, whom we caught in a bear-hunt—'

'Bar behind,' said Mr. Beck.

'This is Captain Ladds, of the 35th Dragoons.'

'Ladds,' said Ladds. 'Nibs, cocoa-nibs—pure aroma—best breakfast-digester—blessing to mothers—perfect fragrance.'

'His name is Ladds; and he wishes to communicate to you the fact that he is the son of the man who made an immense fortune—immense, Tommy?'

Ladds nodded.

'By a crafty compound known as "Ladds' Patent Anti-Dyspeptic Cocoa." This is Ladds' servant, John Bolmer, the best servant who ever put his leg across pig-skin; and my name is Ronald Dunquerque. People generally call me Jack; I don't know why, but they do.'

Their host bowed to each, including the servant, who coloured with pleasure at Jack's description of him; but he shook hands with Ladds.

'One of ours,' he said. 'My name is Lawrence Colquhoun. I sold out before you joined. I came here, as you see. And—and now, gentlemen, I think I hear the first sounds of dinner. Bolmer—you will allow me, Ladds?—you will find claret and champagne behind that curtain. Pardon a hermit's fare. I think they have laid out such a table as the wilderness can boast, in the next room.'

The dinner was not altogether what a man might order at the Junior United, but it was good. There was venison, there was a curry, there was some mountain quail, there was claret, and there was champagne—both good, especially the claret. Then there was coffee.

The Honourable Ronald Dunquerque, whom we

will call in future, what everybody always called him, Jack, ate and drank like Friar John. The keen mountain air multiplied his normal twist by ten. Mr. Gilead P. Beck, who sat down to dinner perfectly unabashed by his rags, was good as a trencherman, but many plates behind the young Englishman. Mr. Lawrence Colquhoun, their host, went on talking almost as if they were in London; only now and then he found himself behind the world. It was his ignorance of the last Derby, the allusion to an old and half-forgotten story, perhaps his use of little phrases—not slang phrases, but those delicately-shaded terms which imply knowledge of current things—which showed him to have been out of London and Paris for more than one season.

'Four years,' he said, 'since I left England.'

'But you will come back to it again?'

'I think not.'

'Better,' said Jack, whose face was a little flushed with the wine. 'Much better. Robinson Crusoe always wanted to get home again. So did Selkirk. So did Philip Quarles.'

Then the host produced cigars. Later on, brandy-and-water.

The brandy-and-water made Mr. Gilead P. Beck, who found himself a good deal crowded out of the

conversation, insist on having his share. He placed his square box on the table, and loosed the straps.

'Let me tell you,' he said, 'the story of my Luck. I was in Sonora City,' he began, patting his box affectionately, 'after the worst three months I ever had; and I went around trying to borrow a few dollars. I got no dollars, but I got free drinks—so many free drinks, that at last I lay down in the street and went to sleep. Wal, gentlemen, I suppose I walked in that slumber of mine, for when I woke up I was lying a mile outside the town. I also entertained angels unawares, for at my head there sat an Indian woman. She was as wrinkled an old squaw as ever skrieked at a buryin'. But she took an interest in me. She took that amount of interest in me that she told me she knew of gold. And then she led me by the hand, gentlemen, that aged and affectionate old squaw, to a place not far from the roadside; and there, lying between two rocks, and hidden in the chapparelle, glittering in the light, was this bauble.' He tapped his box. 'I did not want to be told to take it. I wrapped it in my handkerchief and carried it in my hand. Then she led me back to the road again. "Bad luck you will have," she said; "but it will lead to good luck so

long as that is not broken, sold, given away, or lost." Then she left me, and here it is.'

He opened the little box. There was nothing to be seen but a mass of white wool.

'Bad luck I *have* had. Look at me, gentlemen. Adam was not more destitute when the garden-gates were shut on him. But the good will come somehow.'

He removed the wool and, behold, a miracle of nature! Two thin plates of gold delicately wrought in lines and curious chasing, like the pattern of a butterfly's wing, and of the exact shape, but twice as large. They were poised at the angle, always the same, at which the insect balances itself about a flower. They were set in a small piece of quaintly-marked quartz, which represented the body.

'A golden butterfly!'

'A golden butterfly,' said Mr. Beck. 'No goldsmith made this butterfly. It came from Nature's workshop. It is my Luck.'

> 'And if the butterfly fall and break,
> Farewell the Luck of Gilead Beck,'

said Jack.

'Thank you, sir. That's very neat. I'll take that, sir, if you will allow me, for my motto, unless you want it for yourself.'

'No,' said Jack; 'I have one already.'

> 'If this golden butterfly fall and break,
> Farewell the Luck of Gilead P. Beck,'

repeated the owner of the insect. 'If you are going on, gentlemen, to San Francisco, I hope you will take me with you.'

'Colquhoun,' said Ladds, 'you do not mean to stay on here by yourself? Much better come with us, unless, of course—'

Lying on the table was a piece of an old newspaper in which Jack had wrapped something. Ladds saw Colquhoun mechanically take up the paper, read it, and change colour. Then he looked straight before him, seeing nothing, and Ladds stopped speaking. Then he smiled in a strange far-off way.

'I think I will go with you,' he said.

'Hear, hear!' cried Jack. 'Selkirk returns to the sound of the church-going bell.'

Ladds refrained from looking at the paper in search of things which did not concern himself, but he perceived that Colquhoun had, like Hamlet, seen Something. There *was*, in fact, an announcement in the fragment which greatly interested Lawrence Colquhoun:

'On April 3, by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop

of Turk's Island, at St. George's, Hanover-square, Gabriel Cassilis, of &c., to Victoria, daughter of the late Admiral Sir Benbow Pengelley, K.C.B.'

In the morning they started, Mr. Beck being provided with a new rig-out of a rough and useful kind.

At the last moment one of the Chinamen, Leeching the cook, besought his late master, as a parting favour and for the purpose of self-protection, the gift of a pistol, powder, and ball.

Mr. Colquhoun gave them to him, thinking it a small thing after two years of faithful service. Then Leeching, after loading his pistol, went to work with his comrade for an hour or so.

Presently, Achow being on his knees in the shingle, the perfidious Leeching suddenly cocked his pistol and fired it into Achow's right ear, so that he fell dead.

By this lucky accident Leeching became sole possessor of the little pile of gold which he and the defunct Achow had scraped together and placed in a *cache*.

He proceeded to unearth this treasure, put together his little belongings, and started on the road to San Francisco with a smile of satisfaction.

There was a place in the windings of the road where there was a steep bank. By the worst luck in the world a stone slipped and fell as Leeching passed by. The stone, by itself, would not have mattered much, as it did not fall on Leeching's head: but with it fell a rattlesnake, who was sleeping in the warmth of the sun.

Nothing annoys a rattlesnake more than to be disturbed in his sleep. With angry mind he awoke, looked around, and saw the Chinaman. Illogically connecting him with the fall of the stone, he made for him, and, before poor Leeching knew there was a rattlesnake anywhere near him, bit him in the calf.

Leeching sat down on the bank and realised the position. Being a fatalist, he did not murmur; having no conscience, he did not fear; having no faith, he did not hope; having very little time, he made no testamentary dispositions. In point of fact, he speedily curled up his legs and died.

Then the deserted Empire City was deserted indeed, for there was not even a Chinaman left in it.

END OF PROLOGUE.

CHAPTER I.

Joseph and his Brethren.

The largest and most solid of all the substantial houses in Carnarvon-square, Bloomsbury, is Number Fifteen, which, by reason of its corner position (Mulgrave-street intersecting it at right angles at this point), has been enabled to stretch itself out at the back. It is a house which a man who wanted to convey the idea of a solid income without ostentation or attempt at fashion would find the very thing to assist his purpose. The ladies of such a house would not desire to belong to the world farther west; they would respect the Church, law, and medicine; they would look on the City with favourable eyes when it was represented by a partner in an old firm; they would have sound notions of material comfort; they would read solid books, and would take their pleasure calmly. One always, somehow, in looking at a house, wonders first of what sort its women are. There were, however, no women at Number Fifteen at all, except the maids. Its occupants consisted of

three brothers, all unmarried. They were named respectively Cornelius, Humphrey, and Joseph Jagenal. Cornelius and Humphrey were twins. Joseph was their junior by ten years. Cornelius and Humphrey were fifty—Joseph was forty. People who did not know this thought that Joseph was fifty and his brethren forty.

When the Venerable the Archdeacon of Market Basing, the well-known author of *Sermons on the Duty of Tithe-Offerings*, the *Lesbia of Catullus*, and a *Treatise on the Right Use of the Anapæst in Greek Iambic Verse*, died, it was found that he had bequeathed his little savings, worth altogether about 500*l.* a year, to his three sons in the following proportions: the twins, he said, possessed genius; they would make their mark in the world, but they must be protected. They received the yearly sum of 200*l.* apiece, and it was placed in the hands of trustees to prevent their losing it; the younger was to have the rest, without trustees, because, his father said, 'Joseph is a dull boy and will keep it.' It was a wise distribution of the money. Cornelius, then nineteen, left Oxford immediately, and went to Heidelberg, where he called himself a poet, studied metaphysics, drank beer, and learned to fence. Humphrey, for his part, deserted Cambridge—their father having

chosen that they should not be rivals—and announced his intention of devoting his life to Art. He took up his residence in Rome. Joseph stayed at school, having no other choice. When the boy was sixteen, his guardians articled him to a solicitor. Joseph was dull, but he was methodical, exact, and endowed with a retentive memory. He had also an excellent manner, and the 'appearance of age,' as portwine advertisers say, before he was out of his articles. At twenty-five, Joseph Jagenal was a partner; at thirty, he was the working partner; at forty, he was the senior partner in the great Lincoln's-Inn firm of Shaw, Fairlight, and Jagenal, the confidential advisers of as many respectable county people as any firm in London.

When he was twenty-five, and became a partner, the brethren returned to England simultaneously, and were good enough to live with him and upon him. They had their 200*l.* a year each, and expensive tastes. Joseph, who made a thousand for his share the first year of his admission to the firm, had no expensive tastes, and a profound respect for genius. He took in the twins joyfully, and they stayed with him. When his senior partner died, and Mr. Fairlight retired, so that Joseph's income was largely increased, they made him move from

Torrington-square, where the houses are small, to Carnarvon-square, and regulated his household for him on the broadest and most liberal scale. Needless to say, no part of the little income, which barely served the twins for pocket-money and their *menus plaisirs*, went towards the housekeeping. Cornelius, poet and philosopher, superintended the dinner and daily interviewed the cook. Humphrey, the devotee of art, who furnished the rooms according to the latest designs of the most correct taste, was in command of the cellar. Cornelius took the best sitting-room for himself, provided it with books, easy-chairs, pipes, and an immense study-table with countless drawers. He called it carelessly his Workshop. The room on the first floor overlooking Mulgrave-street, and consequently with a north aspect, was appropriated by Humphrey. He called it his Studio, and furnished it in character, not forgetting the easy-chairs. Joseph had the back room behind the dining-room for himself; it was not called a study or a library, but Mr. Joseph's room. He sat in it alone every evening, at work. There was also a drawing-room, but it was never used. They dined together at half-past six: Cornelius sat at the head, and Humphrey at the foot, Joseph at one side. Art and Intellect, thus happily met together and housed

under one roof, talked to each other. Joseph ate his dinner in silence. Art held his glass to the light, and flashed into enthusiasm over the matchless sparkle, the divine hues, the incomparable radiance, of the wine. Intellect, with a sigh, as one who regrets the loss of a sense, congratulated his brother on his vivid passion for colour, and, taking another glass, discoursed on the æsthetic aspects of a vintage wine. Joseph drank one glass of claret, after which he retired to his den, and left the brethren to finish the bottle. After dinner the twins sometimes went to the theatre, or they repaired arm-in-arm to their club—the Renaissance, now past its prime and a little fogyish; mostly they sat in the Studio or in the Workshop, in two arm-chairs, with a table between them, smoked pipes, and drank brandy and potash-water. They went to bed at any time they felt sleepy—perhaps at twelve, and perhaps at three. Joseph went to bed at half-past ten. The brethren generally breakfasted at eleven, Joseph at eight. After breakfast, unless on rainy days, a uniform custom was observed. Cornelius, poet and philosopher, went to the window and looked out.

Humphrey, artist, and therefore a man of intuitive sympathies, followed him. Then he patted Cornelius on the shoulder, and shook his head.

'Brother, I know your thought. You want to drag me from my work; you think it has been too much for me lately. You are too anxious about me.'

Cornelius smiled.

'Not on my own account too, Humphrey?'

'True—on your account. Let us go out at once, brother. Ah, why did you choose so vast a subject?'

Cornelius was engaged—had been engaged for twenty years—upon an epic poem, entitled the *Upheaving of Ælfred*. The school he belonged to would not, of course, demean themselves by speaking of Alfred. To them Edward was Eadward, Edgar was Eadgar, and old Canute was Knut. In the same way Cicero became Kikero, Virgil was Vergil, and Socrates was spelt, as by the illiterate bargee, with a *k*. So the French prigs of the ante-Boileau period sought to make their trumpery pedantries pass for current coin. So too Chapelain was in labour with the *Pucelle* for thirty years; and when it came— But Cornelius Jagenal could not be compared with Chapelain, because he had as yet brought forth nothing. He sat with what he and his called 'English' books all round him; in other words, he had all the Anglo-Saxon literature on his shelves, and was amassing, as he said, material.

Humphrey, on the other hand, was engaged on a painting, the composition of which offered difficulties which, for nearly twenty years, had proved insuperable. He was painting, he said, the 'Birth of the Renaissance.' It was a subject which required a great outlay in properties. Venetian glass, Italian jewelry, mediæval furniture, copies of paintings—everything necessary to make this work a masterpiece—he bought at Joseph's expense. Up to the present no one had been allowed to see the first rough drawings.

'Where's Cæsar?' Humphrey would say, leading the way to the hall. 'Cæsar! Why, here he is. Cæsar must actually have heard us proposing to go out.'

Cornelius called the dog Kaysar, and he refused to answer to it; so that conversation between him and Cornelius was impossible.

There never was a pair more attached to each other than these twin brethren. They sallied forth each morning at twelve arm-in-arm, with an open and undisguised admiration for each other which was touching. Before them marched Cæsar, who was of mastiff breed, leading the way. Cornelius, the poet, was dressed with as much care as if he were still a young man of five-and-twenty, in a semi-

youthful and wholly-æsthetic costume, in which only the general air, and not the colour, revealed the man of delicate perceptions. Humphrey, the artist, greatly daring, affected a warm brown velvet with a crimson-purple ribbon. Both carried flowers. Cornelius had gloves; Humphrey a cigar. Cornelius was smooth-faced, save for a light fringe on the upper lip. Humphrey wore a heavy moustache and a full long silky beard of a delicately-shaded brown, inclining when the sun shone upon it to a suspicion of auburn. Both were of the same height, rather below the middle; they had features so much alike that, but for the hair on the face of one, it would have been difficult to distinguish between them. Both were thin, pale of face, and both had, by some fatality, the end of their delicately-carven noses slightly tipped with red. Perhaps this was due to the daily and nightly brandy-and-water. And in the airy careless carriage of the two men, their sunny faces and elastic tread, it was impossible to suppose that they were fifty and Joseph only forty.

To be sure, Joseph was a heavy man, stout of build, broad in frame, sturdy in the under-jaw; while his brothers were slight shadowy men. And, to be sure, Joseph had worked all his life, while his brothers never did a stroke. They were born to con-

sume the fruits which Joseph was born to cultivate.

Outside the house the poet heaved a heavy sigh, as if the weight of the epic was for the moment off his mind. The artist looked round with a critical eye on the lights and shadows of the great commonplace square.

'Even in London,' he murmured, 'Nature is too strong for man. Did you ever, my dear Cornelius, catch a more brilliant effect of sunshine than that upon the lilac yonder?'

Time, end of April; season forward, lilacs on the point of bursting into flower; sky dotted with swift-flying clouds, alternate withdrawals and bursts of sunshine.

'I really must,' said Humphrey, 'try to fix that effect.'

His brother took the arm of the artist and drew him gently away.

In front marched Cæsar.

Presently the poet looked round. They were out of the square by this time.

'Where is Kaysar?' he said, with an air of surprise. 'Surely, brother Humphrey, the dog can't be in the Carnarvon Arms?'

'I'll go and see,' said Humphrey, with alacrity.

He entered the bar of the tavern, and his brother waited outside. After two or three minutes, the poet, as if tired of waiting, followed the artist into the bar. He found him with a glass of brandy-and-water cold.

'I had,' he explained, 'a feeling of faintness. Perhaps this spring air is chilly. One cannot be too careful.'

'Quite right,' said the poet. 'I almost think—yes, I really do feel—ah! Thank you, my dear.'

The girl, as if anticipating his wants, set before him a 'four' of brandy and the cold water. Perhaps she had seen the face before. As for the dog, he was lying down with his head on his paws. Perhaps he knew there would be no immediate necessity for moving.

They walked in the direction of the Park, arm-in-arm, affectionately.

It might have been a quarter of an hour after leaving the Carnarvon Arms when the poet stopped and gasped.

'Humphrey, my dear brother, advise me. What would you do if you had a sharp and sudden pain like a knife inside you?'

Humphrey replied promptly:

'If I had a sharp and sudden pain like a knife

inside me, I should take a small glass of brandy neat. Mind, no spoiling the effect with water.'

Cornelius looked at his brother with admiration.

'Such readiness of resource,' he murmured, pressing his arm.

'I think I see—ah, yes—Kaysar—he's gone in before us. The sagacity of that dog is more remarkable than anything I ever read.' He took his small glass of brandy neat.

The artist, looking on, said he might as well have one at the same time. Not, he added, that he felt any immediate want of the stimulant, but he might; and at all times prevention is better than cure.

It was two o'clock when they returned to Carnarvon-square. They walked arm-in-arm, with perhaps even a greater show of confiding affection than had appeared at starting. There was the slightest possible lurch in their walk, and both looked solemn and heavy with thought.

In the hall the artist looked at his watch.

'Pa—pasht two. Corneliush, Work—'

He marched to the Studio with a resolute air, and, arrived there, drew an easy-chair before the fire, sat himself in it, and went fast asleep.

The poet sought the Workshop. On the table lay the portfolio of papers, outside which was em-

blazoned on parchment, with dainty scroll-work by the hands of his brother the artist, the title of his poem:

The Upbeading of Aelfred:

AN EPIC POEM IN TWENTY-FOUR CANTOS.

By Cornelius Jagenal.

He gazed at it fondly for a few minutes; vaguely took up a pen, as if he intended to finish the work on the spot; and then with a sigh, thought being too much for brain, he slipped into his arm-chair, put up his feet, and was asleep in two minutes. At half-past five, one of the maids—they kept no footman in Carnarvon-square—brought him tea.

'I have been dozing, have I, Jane?' he asked. 'Very singular thing for me to do.'

We are but the creatures of habit. The brethren took the same walk every day, made the same remarks, with an occasional variation, and took the same morning drams; they spent the middle of the day in sleep, they woke up for the afternoon tea, and they never failed to call Jane's attention to the singularity of the fact that they had been asleep. This day Jane lingered instead of going away when the tea was finished.

'Did master tell you, sir,' she asked, 'that Miss Fleming was coming to-day?'

It was an irritating thing that, although Cornelius ordered the dinner and sat at the head of the table, although Humphrey was in sole command of the wine-cellar, the servants always called Joseph the master. Great is the authority of him who keeps the bag; the power of the penniless twins was a shadowy and visionary thing.

The master had told his brothers that Miss Fleming would probably have to come to the house, but no date was fixed.

'Miss Fleming came this afternoon, sir,' said Jane, 'with a French maid. She's in Mr. Joseph's room now.'

'O, tell Mr. Humphrey, Jane, and we will dress for dinner. Tell Mr. Humphrey also that perhaps Miss Fleming would like a glass of champagne to-day.'

Jane told the artist.

'Always thoughtful,' said Humphrey, with enthusiasm. 'Cornelius is for ever thinking of others' comfort. To be sure Miss Fleming shall have a glass of champagne.'

He brought up two bottles, such was his anxiety to give full expression to his brother's wishes.

When the dinner-bell rang, the brethren emerged simultaneously from their rooms, and descended the

stairs together, arm-in-arm. Perhaps in expectation of dinner, perhaps in anticipation of the champagne, perhaps with pleasure at the prospect of meeting with Joseph's ward, the faces of both were lit with a sunny smile, and their eyes with a radiant light, which looked like the real and genuine enthusiasm of humanity. It was a pity that Humphrey wore a beard, or that Cornelius did not; otherwise it would have been difficult to distinguish between this pair so much alike—these youthful twins of fifty, who almost looked like five-and-twenty.

CHAPTER II.

'Phillis is my only joy.'

'My brothers, Miss Fleming!'

Joseph introduced the twins with a pride impossible to dissemble. They were so youthful-looking, so airy, so handsome, besides being so nobly endowed with genius, that his pride may be excused. Castor and Pollux the wrong side of forty, but slim still and well preserved—these Greek figures do not run tall—might have looked like Cornelius and Humphrey.

They parted company for a moment to welcome the young lady, large-eyed as Hêrê, who rose to greet them, and then took up a position on the hearthrug, one with his hand on the other's shoulder, like the Siamese twins, and smiled pleasantly, as if, being accustomed to admiration and even awe, they wished to reassure Miss Fleming and put her at ease.

Dinner being announced, Cornelius, the elder by a few moments, gave his arm to the young lady. Humphrey, the younger, hovered close behind, as if he too was taking his part in the chivalrous act.

Joseph followed alone, of course, not counting in the little procession.

Phillis Fleming's arrival at No. 15 Carnarvon-square was in a manner legal. She belonged to the office, not to the shrine of intellect, poesy, and art created by the twin brethren. She was an orphan and a ward. She had two guardians: one of them, Mr. Lawrence Colquhoun, being away from England; and the other, Mr. Abraham Dyson, with whom she had lived since her sixth birthday, having finished his earthly career just before this history begins, that is to say, in the spring of last year. Shaw, Fairlight, and Jagenal were solicitors to both gentlemen. Therefore Joseph found himself obliged to act for this young lady when, Mr. Abraham Dyson buried and done with, it became a question what was to be done with her. There were offers from several disinterested persons on Miss Fleming's bereaved condition being known. Miss Skimpit, of the Highgate Collegiate Establishment for Young Ladies, proposed by letter to receive her as a parlour-boarder, and hinted at the advantages of a year's discipline, tempered by Christian kindness, for a young lady educated in so extraordinary and godless a manner. The clergyman of the new district church at Finchley called personally upon Mr. Jagenal. He said that

he did not know the young lady except by name, but that, feeling the dreadful condition of a girl brought up without any of the gracious influences of Anglican Ritual and Dogma, he was impelled to offer her a home with his Sisterhood. Here she would receive clear dogmatic teaching, and learn what the Church meant by submission, fasting, penance, and humiliation. Mr. Jagenal thought she might also learn how to bestow her fortune on Anglo-Catholic objects when she came of age, and dismissed his reverence with scant courtesy. Two or three widows who had known better days offered their services, which were declined with thanks. Joseph even refused to let Miss Fleming stay with Mrs. Cassilis, the wife of Abraham Dyson's second cousin. He thought that perhaps this lady would not be unwilling to enliven her house by the attraction of an heiress and a *débutante*. And it occurred to him that, for a short time at least, she might, without offending a censorious world and until her remaining guardian's wishes could be learned, take up her abode at the house of the three bachelors.

'I am old, Miss Fleming,' he said. 'Forty years old; a great age to you; and my brothers, Cornelius and Humphrey, who live with me, are older still. Cornelius is a great poet; he is engaged on a work

—the *Upheaving of Ælfred*—which will immortalise his name. Humphrey is an artist; he is working at a group the mere conception of which, Cornelius says, would make even the brain of Michael Angelo stagger. You will be proud, I think, in after-years to have made the acquaintance of my brothers.'

She came, having no choice or any other wish, accompanied by her French maid and the usual impedimenta of travel.

Phillis Fleming—her father called her Phillis because she was his only joy—was nineteen. She is twenty now, because the events of this story only happened last year. Her mother died in giving her birth; she had neither brothers nor sisters, nor many cousins, and those far away. When she was six her father died too—not of an interesting consumption or of a broken heart, or any ailment of that kind. He was a jovial fox-hunting ex-captain of cavalry, with a fair income and a carefully-cultivated taste for enjoyment. He died from an accident in the field. By his will he left all his money to his one child, and appointed as her trustees his father's old friend, Abraham Dyson of Twickenham and the City, and with him his own friend, Lawrence Colquhoun, a man some ten years younger than himself, with tastes and pursuits very much like his own.

Of course the child was taken to the elder guardian's house, and Colquhoun, going his way in the world, never gave his trust or its responsibilities a moment's thought.

Phillis Fleming had the advantage of a training quite different from that which is usually accorded to young ladies. She went to Mr. Abraham Dyson at a time when that old gentleman, always full of crotchety ideas, was developing a plan of his own for female education. His theory of woman's training having just then grown in his mind to finished proportions, he welcomed the child as a subject sent quite providentially to his hand, and proceeded to put his views into practice upon little Phillis. That he did so showed a healthy belief in his own judgment. Some men would have hastened into print with a mere theory. Mr. Dyson intended to wait for twelve years or so, and to write his work on woman's education when Phillis's example might be the triumphant proof of his own soundness. The education conducted on Mr. Dyson's principles and rigidly carried out was approaching completion when it suddenly came to an abrupt termination. Few things in this world quite turn out as we hope and expect. It was on the cards that Abraham Dyson might die before the proof of his theory. This, in fact, hap-

pened ; and his chief regret at leaving a world where he had been supremely comfortable, and able to enjoy his glass of port to his eightieth and last year, was that he was leaving the girl, the creation of his theory, in an unfinished state.

'Phillis,' he said, on his deathbed, 'the edifice is now complete,—all but the Coping-stone. Alas that I could not live to put it on!'

And what the Coping-stone was no man could guess. Great would be the cleverness of him who, seeing a cathedral finished save for roof and upper courses, would undertake to put on these, with all the ornaments, spires, lanterns, gargoyles, pinnacles, flying buttresses, turrets, belfries, and crosses drawn in the dead designer's lost plans.

Abraham Dyson was a wealthy man. Therefore he was greatly respected by all his relations, in spite of certain eccentricities, notably those which forbade him to ask any of them to his house. If the nephews, nieces, and cousins wept bitterly on learning their bereavement, deeper and more bitter were their lamentations when they found that Mr. Dyson had left none of them any money.

Not one penny; not a mourning-ring; not a single sign or token of affection to one of them. It was a cruel throwing of cold water on the tenderest

affections of the heart, and Mr. Dyson's relations were deeply pained. Some of them swore; others felt that in this case it was needless to give sorrow words, and bore their sufferings in silence.

Nor did he leave any money to Phillis.

This obstinate old theorist left it all to found a college for girls, who were to be educated in the same manner as Phillis Fleming, and in accordance with the scheme stated to be fully drawn up and among his papers.

Up to the present, Joseph Jagenal had not succeeded in finding the scheme. There were several rolls of paper, forming portions of the great work, but none were finished, and all pointed to the last chapter, that entitled the 'Coping-stone,' in which, it was stated, would be found the whole scheme with complete fulness of detail. But this last chapter could not be found anywhere. If it never was found, what would become of the will? Then each one of Mr. Dyson's relations began to calculate what might fall to himself out of the inheritance. That was only natural, and perhaps it was not every one who, like Mr. Gabriel Cassilis, openly lamented the number of Mr. Dyson's collateral heirs.

Not to be found. Joseph Jagenal's clerks now engaged in searching everywhere for it, and all the

relations praying—all fervently and some with faith—that it might never turn up.

So that poor Phillis is sitting down to dinner with her education unfinished—where is that Coping-stone? Every young lady who has had a finishing year at Brighton may look down upon her. Perhaps, however, as her education has been of a kind quite unknown in polite circles, and she has never heard of a finishing year, she may be calm even in the presence of other young ladies.

What sort of girl is she?

To begin with, she has fifty thousand pounds. Not the largest kind of fortune, but still something. More than most girls have; more than the average heiress has. Enough to make young Fortunio Hunter prick up his ears, smooth down his moustache, and begin to inquire about guardians; enough to purchase a roomy cottage where Love may be comfortable; enough to enable the neediest wooer, if he be successful, to hang up his hat on the peg behind the door and sit down for the rest of his years. Fifty thousand pounds is a sum which means possibilities. It was her mother's, and, very luckily for her, it was so tied up that Captain Fleming, her father, could not touch more than the interest, which, at three per cent, amounts, as may

be calculated, to fifteen hundred a year. Really, after explaining that a young lady has fifty thousand, what further praise is wanted, what additional description is necessary? By contemplation of fifty thousand pounds, ardent youth is inflamed as by a living likeness of Helen. Be she lovely or be she loathly, be she young or old, be she sweet or shrewish —she has fifty thousand pounds.

With her fifty thousand pounds the gods have given Phillis Fleming a tall figure, the lines of which are as delicately curved as those of any yacht in the Solent or of any statue from Greek studio. She is slight, perhaps too slight; she has hair of a common dark brown, but it is fine hair, there is a great wealth of it, it has a gleam and glimmer of its own as the sunlight falls upon it, as if there were a hidden colour lying somewhere in it waiting to be discovered; her eyes, like her hair, are brown; they are also large and lustrous; her lips are full; her features are not straight and regular, like those of women's beauties, for her chin is perhaps a little short, though square and determined; she has a forehead which is broad and rather low; she wears an expression in which good temper, intelligence, and activity are more marked than beauty. She is quick to mark the things that she sees, and she sees

everything. Her hands are curious because they are so small, so delicate, and so sympathetic; while her face is in repose you may watch a passing emotion by the quivering of her fingers, just as you may catch, if you have the luck, the laughter or tears of most girls first in the brightness or the clouding of their eyes.

There are girls who, when we meet them in the street, pass us like the passing of sunshine on an April day; who, if we spend the evening in a room where they are, make us understand something of the warmth which Nature intended to be universal, but has somehow only made special; whom it is a pleasure to serve, whom it is a duty to reverence, who can bring purity back to the brain of a rake, and make a young man's heart blossom like a rose in June.

Of such is Phillis Fleming.

CHAPTER III.

Phillis's Education.

The dinner began without much conversation; partly because the twins were hungry, and partly because they were a little awed by the presence of an unwonted guest in white draperies.

Phillis noted that, so far as she had learned as yet, things of a domestic kind in the outer world were much like things at Mr. Dyson's; that is to say, the furniture of the dining-room was similar, and the dinner was the same. I do not know why she expected it, but she had some vague notion that she might be called upon to eat strange dishes.

'The Böllinger, brother Cornelius,' said the artist.

'Thoughtful of you, brother Humphrey,' the poet answered. 'Miss Fleming, the Böllinger is in your honour.'

Phillis looked puzzled. She did not understand

where the honour came in. But she tasted her glass.

'It is a little too dry for me,' she said, with admirable candour. 'If you have any Veuve Clicquot, Mr. Jagenal' — she addressed the younger brother—'I should prefer that.'

All three perceptibly winced. Jane the maid presently returned with a bottle of the sweeter wine. Miss Fleming tasted it critically, and pronounced in its favour.

'Mr. Dyson, my guardian,' she said, 'always used to say the ladies like their wine sweet. At least, I do. So he used to drink Perier Jouet très sec, and I had Veuve Clicquot.'

The poet laid his forefinger upon his brow, and looked meditatively at his glass. Then he filled it again. Then he drank it off helplessly. This was a remarkable young lady.

'You lived a very quiet life,' said Joseph, with a note of interrogation in his voice, 'with your guardian at Highgate?'

'Yes, very quiet. Only two or three gentlemen ever came to the house, and I never went out.'

'A fair prisoner, indeed,' murmured the poet. 'Danaë in her tower waiting for the shower of gold.'

'Danaë must have wished,' said Phillis, 'when she was put in the box and sent to sea, that the shower of gold had never come.'

Cornelius began to regret his allusion to the mythological maid, for his classical memory failed, and he could not at the moment recollect what box the young lady referred to. This, no doubt, came of much poring over Anglo-Saxon Chronicles. But he remembered other circumstances connected with Danaë's history, and was silent.

'At least you went out,' said Humphrey, 'to see the Academy and the Water-colours.'

She shook her head.

'I have never seen a picture-gallery at all. I have not once been outside Mr. Dyson's grounds until to-day, since I was six years old.'

Humphrey supported his nervous system, like his brother, with another glass of the Böllinger.

'You found your pleasure in reading divine Poetry,' said the Maker softly; 'perhaps in writing Poetry yourself.

'O, dear, no!' said Phillis. 'I have not yet learned to read. Mr. Dyson said that ladies ought not to learn reading till they are of an age when acquiring that mischievous art cannot hurt themselves or their fellow-creatures.'

Phillis said this with an air of superior wisdom, as if there could be no disputing the axiom.

Humphrey looked oceans of sympathy at Cornelius, who took out his handkerchief as if to wipe away a tear, but as none was in readiness he only sighed.

'You were taught other things, however?' Joseph asked.

'Yes; I learned to play. My master came twice a week, and I can play pretty well; I play either by ear or by memory. You see,' she added simply, 'I never forget anything that I am told.'

Compensation of civilised nature. We read, and memory suffers. Those who do not read remember. Before wandering minstrels learned to read and write, the whole Iliad was handed down on men's tongues; there are Brahmins who repeat all their Sacred Books word for word without slip or error, and have never learned to read; there are men at Oxford who can tell you the winners of Events for a fabulous period, and yet get plucked for Greats, because, as they will tell you themselves, they really cannot read. Phillis did not know how to read. But she remembered — remembered everything; could repeat a poem dictated twice if it were a hun-

dred lines long, and never forgot it; caught up an air and learned how to play it at a sitting.

She could not read. All the world of fiction was lost to her. All the fancies of poets were lost to her; all the records of folly and crime which we call history were unknown to her.

Try to think what, and of what sort, would be the mind of a person, otherwise cultivated, unable to read. In the first place, he would be clear and dogmatic in his views, not having the means of comparison; next, he would be dependent on oral teaching and rumour for his information; he would have to store everything, as soon as learned, away in his mind to be lost altogether, unless he knew where to lay his hand upon it; he would hear little of the outer world, and very little would interest him beyond his own circle; he would be in the enjoyment of all the luxuries of civilisation without understanding how they got there; he would be like the Mohammedans when they came into possession of Byzantium, in the midst of things unintelligible, useful, and delightful.

'You will play to us after dinner, if you will be so kind,' said Joseph.

'Can it be, Miss Fleming,' asked Humphrey, 'that you never went outside the house at all?'

'O, no; I could ride in the paddock. It was a good large field and my pony was clever at jumping; so I got on pretty well.'

'Would it be too much to ask you how you managed to get through the day?'

'Not at all,' she replied; 'it was very easy. I had a ride before breakfast; gave Mr. Dyson his tea at ten; talked with him till twelve; we always talked "subjects," you know, and had a regular course. When we had done talking, he asked me questions. Then I probably had another ride before luncheon. In the afternoon I played, looked after my dress, and drew.'

'You are, then, an Artist,' cried Humphrey enthusiastically. 'Cornelius, I saw from the first that Miss Fleming had the eye of an Artist.'

'I do not know about that; I can draw people. I will show you some of my sketches, if you like, to-morrow. They are all heads and figures; I shall draw all of you to-night before going to bed.'

'And in the evening?'

'Mr. Dyson dined at seven. Sometimes he had one or two gentlemen to dine with him; never any lady. When there was no one, we talked "subjects" again.'

Never any lady! Here was a young woman, rich,

of good family, handsome and, in her way, accomplished, who had never seen or talked with a lady, nor gone out of the house save into its gardens since she was a child.

Yet, in spite of all these disadvantages and the strangeness of her position, she was perfectly self-possessed. When she left the table, the two elder brethren addressed themselves to the bottle of Château Mouton with more rapidity than was becoming the dignity of the wine. Joseph almost immediately joined his ward. When the twins left the dining-room with its empty decanters, and returned arm-in-arm to the drawing-room, they found their younger brother in animated conversation with the girl. Strange that Joseph should so far forget his usual habits as not to go straight to his own room. The two bosoms which heaved in a continual harmony with each other felt a simultaneous pang of jealousy for which there was no occasion. Joseph was only thinking of the Coping-stone.

'Did I not feel it strange driving through the streets?' Phillis was saying. 'It is all so strange that I am bewildered—so strange and so wonderful I used to dream of what it was like; my maid told me something about it; but I never guessed the reality. There are a hundred things more than I can ever draw.'

It was, as hinted above, the custom of this young person, as it was that of the Mexicans, to make drawings of everything which occurred. She was thus enabled to preserve a tolerably faithful record of her life.

'Show me,' said Joseph—'show me the heads of my brothers and myself, that you promised to do, as soon as they are finished.'

The brethren sat together on a sofa, the Poet in his favourite attitude of meditation, forefinger on brow; the Artist with his eyes fixed on the fire catching the effects of colour. Their faces were just a little flushed with the wine they had taken.

One after the other crossed the room and spoke to their guest.

Said Cornelius:

'You are watching my brother Humphrey. Study him, Miss Fleming; it will repay you well to know that childlike and simple nature, innocent of the world, and aglow with the flame of genius.'

'I think I can draw him now,' said Phillis, looking at the Artist as hard as a turnkey taking Mr. Pickwick's portrait.

Then came Humphrey:

'I see your eyes turned upon my brother Cornelius. He is a great, a noble fellow, Miss Fleming.

Cultivate him, talk to him, learn from him. You will be very glad some day to be able to boast that you have met my brother Cornelius. To know him is a Privilege; to converse with him is an Education.'

'Come,' said Joseph cheerfully, 'where is the piano? This is a bachelor's house, but there is a piano somewhere. Have you got it, Cornelius?'

The Poet shook his head, with a soft sad smile.

'Nay,' he said, 'is a Workshop the place for music? Let us rather search for it in the Realms of Art.'

In fact it was in Mr. Humphrey's studio, whither they repaired. The girl sat down, and as she touched the keys her eyes lit up and her whole look changed. Joseph was the only one of the three who really cared for music. He stood by the fire and said nothing. The brethren on either side of the performer displayed wonders of enthusiastic admiration, each in his own way—the poet sad and reflective, as if music softened his soul; the artist with an effervescing gaiety delightful to behold. Joseph was thinking. 'Can we'—had his thoughts taken form of speech—'can we reconstruct from the girl's own account the old man's scheme anew, provided the

chapter on the Coping-stone be never found? Problem given. A girl brought up in seclusion, without intercourse with any of her sex except illiterate servants, yet bred to be a lady; not allowed even to learn reading, but taught orally, so as to hold her own in talk: required to discover what the old man meant by it, and what was wanted to finish the structure. Could it be reading and writing? Could Abraham Dyson have intended to finish where all other people begin?'

This solution mightily commended itself to Joseph, and he went to bed in great good spirits at his own cleverness.

In the dead of night he awoke in fear and trembling.

'They will go into Chancery,' he thought. 'What if the Court refuses to take my view?'

At three in the morning the brethren, long left alone with their pipes, rose to go to bed.

Brandy-and-soda sometimes makes men truthful after the third tumbler, and beguiles them with illusory hopes after the fourth. The twins were at the end of their fourth.

'Cornelius,' said the Artist, 'she has 50,000*l.*'

'She has, brother Humphrey.'

'It is a pity, Cornelius, that we, who have only 200*l.* a year each, are already fifty years of age.'

'Humphrey, what age do we feel?'

'Thirty. Not a month more,' replied the Artist, striking out with both fists at an imaginary foe—probably old Time.

'Right. Not an hour above the thirty,' said the Bard, smiting his chest gently. 'As for Joseph, he is too old—'

'Very much too old—'

'To think of marrying such a young—'

'Fresh and innocent—'

'Engaging and clever girl as Miss Phillis Fleming.'

Did they then both intend to marry the young lady?

CHAPTER IV.

'To taste the freshness of the morning air.'

PHILLIS retreated to her own room at her accustomed hour of ten. Her nerves were excited; her brain was troubled with the events of this day of emancipation. She was actually in the world, the great world of which her guardian had told her, the world where history was made, where wicked kings, as Mr. Dyson perpetually impressed upon her, made war their play and the people their playthings. She was in the world where all those things were done of which she had only heard as yet. She had seen the streets of London, or some of them—those streets along which had ridden the knights whose pictures she loved to draw, the princesses and queens whose stories Mr. Dyson had taught her; where the business of the world was carried on, and where there flowed up and down the ceaseless stream of those whom necessity spurs to action. As a matter of narrow fact, she had seen nothing but that part of London which lies between Highgate-hill and Car-

narvon-square; but to her it seemed the City, the centre of all life, the heart of civilisation. She regretted only that she had not been able to discern the Tower of London. That might be, however, close to Mr. Jagenal's house, and she would look for it in the morning.

What a day! She sat before her fire and tried to picture it all over again. Horses, carriages, carts, and people rushing to and fro; shops filled with the most wonderful exhibition of precious things; eccentric people with pipes, who trundled carts piled with yellow oranges; gentlemen in blue with helmets, who lounged negligently along the streets; boys who ran and whistled; boys who ran and shouted; boys who ran and sold papers; always boys—where were all the girls? Where were they all going? and what were they all wishing to do?

In the evening the world appeared to narrow itself. It consisted of dinner with three elderly gentlemen; one of whom was thoughtful about herself, spoke kindly to her, and asked her about her past life; while the other two—and here she laughed—talked unintelligibly about Art and themselves, and sometimes praised each other.

Then she opened her sketch-book and began to draw the portraits of her new friends. And first she

produced a faithful *effigies* of the twins. This took her nearly an hour to draw, but when finished it made a pretty picture. The brethren stood with arms intertwined like two children, with eyes gazing fondly into each other's, and heads thrown back, in the attitude of poetic and artistic meditation which they mostly affected. A clever sketch, and she was more than satisfied when she held it up to the light and looked at it, before placing it in her portfolio.

'Mr. Humphrey said I had the eye of an artist,' she murmured. 'I wonder what he will say when he sees this.'

Then she drew the portrait of Joseph. This was easy. She drew him sitting a little forward, playing with his watch-chain, looking at her with deep grave eyes.

Then she closed her eyes and began to recall the endless moving panorama of the London streets. But this she could not draw. There came no image to her mind, only a series of blurred pictures running into each other.

Then she closed her sketch-book, put up her pencils, and went to bed. It was twelve o'clock. Joseph was still thinking over the terms of Mr. Dyson's will and the chapter on the Coping-stone.

The twins were taking their third split soda—it was brotherly to divide a bottle, and the mixture was less likely to be unfairly diluted.

Phillis went to bed, but she could not sleep. The steps of the passers-by, the strange room, the excitement of the day, kept her awake. She was like some fair yacht suddenly launched from the dock where she has grown slowly to her perfect shape, upon the waters of the harbour, which she takes for the waters of the great ocean. She looked round her bedroom in Carnarvon-square, and because it was not Highgate, thought it must be the vast, shelterless, and unpitying world of which she had so often heard, and at thought of which, brave as she was, she had so often shuddered.

It was nearly three when she fairly slept, and then she had a strange dream. She thought that she was part of the great procession which never ended all day long in the streets, only sometimes a little more crowded and sometimes a little thinner. She pushed and hastened with the rest. She would have liked to stay and examine the glittering things exhibited—the gold and jewelry, the dainty cakes and delicate fruits, the gorgeous dresses in the windows—but she could not. All pushed on, and she with them; there had been no beginning of the rush,

and there seemed to be no end. Faces turned round and glared at her—faces which she marked for a moment—they were the same which she had seen in the morning; faces hard and faces hungry; faces cruel and faces forbidding; faces that were bent on doing something desperate—every kind of face except a sweet face. That is a rare thing for a stranger to find in a London street. The soft sweet faces belong to the country. She wondered why they all looked at her so curiously. Perhaps because she was a stranger.

Presently there was a sort of hue and cry, and everybody began running, she with them. Oddly enough, they all ran after her. Why? Was that also because she was a stranger? Only the younger men ran, but the rest looked on. The twins, however, were both running among the pursuers. The women pointed and flouted at her; the older men nodded, wagged their heads, and laughed. Faster they ran and faster she fled; they distanced, she and her pursuers, the crowd behind; they passed beyond the streets and into country fields, where hedges took the place of the brilliant windows; they were somehow back in the old Highgate paddock which had been so long her only outer world. The pursuers were reduced to three or four, among them, by

some odd chance, the twin brethren; and as one, but who she could not tell, caught up with her and laid his hand upon hers, and she could run no longer and could resist no more, but fell, not with terror at all, but rather a sense of relief and gladness, into a clutch which was like an embrace of a lover for softness and strength, she saw in front of her dead old Abraham Dyson, who clapped his hands and cried, 'Well run, well won! The Coping-stone, my Phillis, of your education!'

She woke with a start, and sat up looking round the room. Her dream was so vivid that she saw the group before her very eyes in the twilight—herself, with a figure, dim and undistinguishable in the twilight, leaning over her; and a little distance off old Abraham Dyson himself, standing, as she best remembered him, upright, and with his hands upon his stick. He laughed and wagged his head and nodded it as he said: 'Well run, well won, my Phillis; it is the Coping-stone!'

This was a very remarkable dream for a young lady of nineteen. Had she told it to Joseph Jagenal it might have led his thoughts into a new channel.

She rubbed her eyes, and the vision disappeared. Then she laid her head again upon the pillow, just a

little frightened at her ghosts, and presently dropped off to sleep.

This time she had no more dreams; but she awoke soon after it was daybreak, being still unquiet in her new surroundings.

And now she remembered everything with a rush. She had left Highgate; she was in Carnarvon-square; she was in Mr. Joseph Jagenal's house; she had been introduced to two gentlemen, one of whom was said to have a childlike nature all aglow with the flame of genius, while the other was described as a great, a noble fellow, to know whom was a Privilege and to converse with whom was an Education.

She laughed when she thought of the pair. Like Nebuchadnezzar, she had forgotten her dream. Unlike that king, she did not care to recall it.

The past was gone. A new life was about to begin. And the April sun was shining full upon her window-blinds.

Phillis sprang from her bed and tore open the curtains with eager hand. Perhaps facing her might be the Tower of London. Perhaps the Thames, the silver Thames, with London-bridge. Perhaps St. Paul's Cathedral, 'which Christopher Wren built in place of the old one destroyed by the Great Fire.'

Phillis's facts in history were short and decisive, like the above.

No Tower of London at all. No St. Paul's Cathedral. No silver Thames. Only a great square with houses all round. Carnarvon-square at dawn. Not, perhaps, a fairy piece, but wonderful in its novelty to this newly-emancipated cloistered nun, with whom a vivid sense of the beautiful had grown up by degrees in her mind, fed only in the pictures supplied by the imagination. She knew the trees that grew in Lord Mansfield's park, beyond the paddock; she could catch in fine days a glimpse of the vast city that stretches itself out from the feet of breezy Highgate; she knew the flowers of her own garden; and for the rest—she imagined it. River, lake, mountain, forest, and field, she knew them only by talk with her guardian. And the mighty ocean she knew because her French maid had crossed it when she quitted fair Normandy, and told her again and again of the horrors encountered by those who go down to the sea in ships.

So that a second garden was a new revelation. Besides, it was bright and pretty. There were the first flowers of spring, gay tulips and pretty things, whose names she did not know or could not make out from the window. The shrubs and trees were

green with the first sweet chlorine foliage of April, clear and fresh from the broken buds which lay thick upon the ground, the tender leaflets as yet all unsullied by the London smoke.

The pavement was deserted, because it was as yet too early for any one, even a milk-boy, to be out. The only living person to be seen was a gardener, already at work among the plants.

A great yearning came over her to be out in the open air and among the flowers. At Highgate she rose at all hours; worked in the garden; saddled and rode her pony in the field; and amused herself in a thousand ways before the household rose, subject to no restraint or law but one—that she was not to open the front-door, or venture herself in the outer world.

'Mr. Jagenal said I was to do as I liked,' she said, hesitating. 'It cannot be wrong to go out of the front-door now. Besides,' reasoning here like a casuist, 'perhaps it is the back-door which leads to that garden.'

In a quarter of an hour she was ready. She was not one of those young ladies who, because no one is looking at them, neglect their personal appearance. On the contrary, she always dressed for herself; therefore, she always dressed well.

This morning she wore a morning costume, all one colour, and I think it was gray, but am not quite certain. It was in the graceful fashion of last year, lying in long curved lines, and fitting closely to her slender and tall figure. A black ribbon was tied round her neck, and in her hat—the hats of last year did not suit every kind of face, but they suited the face of Phillis Fleming—she wore one of those bright little birds whose destruction for the purposes of fashion we all deplore. In her hand she carried, as if she were still at Highgate and going to saddle her pony, a small riding-whip. And thus she opened the door, and slid down the stairs of the great silent house as stealthily and almost as fearfully as the Lady Godiva on a certain memorable day. It was a ghostly feeling which came over her when she ran across the broad hall, and listened to the pattering of her own feet upon the oilcloth. The broad daylight streamed through the *réverbère ;* but yet the place seemed only half lit up. The closed doors on either hand looked as if dreadful things lurked behind them. With something like a shudder she let down the door-chain, unbarred the bolts, and opened the door. As she passed through she was aware of a great rush across the hall behind her. It was Cæsar, the mastiff. Awakened by a noise as of one burgling,

he crept swiftly and silently up the kitchen-stairs, with intent to do a desperate deed of valour, and found to his rapturous joy that it was only the young lady, she who came the night before, and that she was going out for an early morning walk—a thing he, for his part, had not been permitted to do for many, many moons, not since he had been brought—a puppy yet, and innocent—to the heart of London.

No one out at all except themselves. What joy! Phillis shut the door very carefully behind her, looked up and down the street, and then running down the steps seized the happy Cæsar by the paws and danced round and round with him upon the pavement. Then they both ran a race. She ran like Atalanta, but Cæsar led till the finish, when out of a courtesy more than Castilian, he allowed himself to be beaten, and Phillis won by a neck. This result pleased them both, and Phillis discovered that her race had brought her quite to the end of one side of the square. And then, looking about her, she perceived that a gate of the garden was open, and went in, followed by Cæsar, now in the seventh heaven. This was better, far better, than leading a pair of twins who sometimes tied knots with their legs. The gate was left open by the under-gardener, who had arisen thus early in the morning with a view to

carrying off some of the finer tulips for himself. They raced and chased each other up and down the gravel walks between the lilacs and laburnums bursting into blossom. Presently they came to the under-gardener himself, who was busy potting a selection of the tulips. He stared as if at a ghost. Half-past five in the morning, and a young lady, with a dog, looking at him.

He stiffened his upper lip, and put the spade before the flower-pots.

'Beg pardon, miss. No dogs allowed. On the rules, miss.'

'William,' she replied—for she was experienced in under-gardeners, knew that they always answer to the name of William, also that they are exposed to peculiar temptations in the way of bulbs—'William, for whom are you potting those tulips?'

Then, because the poor youth's face was suffused and his countenance was 'unto himself for a betrayal,'—she whistled—actually whistled—to Cæsar, and ran on laughing.

'Here's a rum start,' said William. 'A young lady as knows my name, what I'm up to and all, coming here at five o'clock in the blessed morning when all young ladies as I ever heard of has got their noses in their pillowses—else 'tain't no good

being a young lady. Ketches me a-disposin' of the toolups. With a dawg, and whistles like a young nobleman.'

He began putting back the flowers.

'No knowin' who she mayn't tell, nor what she mayn't say. It's dangerous, William.'

By different roads, Montaigne wrote, we arrive at the same end. William's choice of the path of virtue was in this case due to Phillis's early visit.

CHAPTER V.

'Te duce, Cæsar.'

Tired of running, the girl began to walk. It was an April morning, when the east wind for once had forgotten to blow. Walking, she whistled one of the ditties that she knew. She had a very superior mode of performing on that natural piccolo-flute, the human mouth: it was a way of her own, not at all like the full round whistle of the street-boy, with as much volume as in a bottle of '51 port, as full of unmeaning sound as a later poem of Robert Browning's, and as unmelodious as the instrument on which that poet has always played. Quite the contrary. Phillis's whistle was of a curious delicacy and of a bullfinch-like note, only more flexible. She trilled out an old English ditty, 'When Love was young,' first simply, and then with variations. Presently, forgetting that she was not in the old paddock, she began to sing it in her fresh young voice, William the under-gardener and Cæsar the dog her only audience. They were differently affected. William grew sad, thinking of

his sins. The dog wagged his tail and rushed round and round the singer by way of appreciation. Music saddens the guilty, but maketh glad those who are clear of conscience.

It was half-past six when she became aware that she was getting hungry. In the old times it was easy to descend to the kitchen and make what Indian people call a *chota hazri*, a little breakfast for herself. Now she was not certain whether, supposing the servants were about, her visit would be well received; or, supposing they were not yet up, she should know where to find the kettle, the tea, and the firewood.

She left the garden, followed by Cæsar, who was also growing hungry after his morning walk, and resolved on going straight home.

There were two objections to this.

First, she did not know one house from another, and they were all alike. Second, she did not know the number, and could not have read it had she known it.

Mr. Jagenal's door was painted a dark brown; so were they all. Mr. Jagenal's door had a knocker; so had they all. Could she go all round the square knocking at every door, and waking up the people to ask if Mr. Jagenal lived there? She knew little of the world, but it did occur to her that it would seem

unconventional for a young lady to 'knock in' at six in the morning. She did not, most unfortunately, think of asking William the under-gardener.

She turned to the dog.

'Now, Cæsar,' she said; 'take me home.'

Cæsar wagged his tail, nodded his head, and started off before her at a smart walk, looking round now and then to see that his charge was following.

'Lucky,' said Phillis, 'that I thought of the dog.'

Cæsar proceeded with great solemnity to cross the road, and began to march down the side of the square, Phillis expecting him to stop at every house. But he did not. Arrived at the corner where Carnarvon-street strikes off the square he turned aside, and looking round to see that his convoy was steering the same course, he trudged sturdily down that thoroughfare.

'This cannot be right,' thought Phillis. But she was loth to leave the dog, for to lose him would be to lose everything, and she followed. Perhaps he knew of a back way. Perhaps he would take her for a little walk, and show her the Tower of London.

Cæsar, no longer running and bounding around her, walked on with the air of one who has an important business on hand, and means to carry it

through. Carnarvon-street is long, and of the half-dismal, half-genteel order of Bloomsbury. Cæsar walked half-way down the street. Then he suddenly came to a dead stop. It was in front of a tavern, the Carnarvon Arms, the door of which, for it was an early house, was already open, and the potboy was taking down the shutters. The fact that the shutters were only half down made the dog at first suspect that there was something wrong. The house, as he knew it, always had the shutters down and the portals open. As, however, there seemed no unlawfulness of licensed hours to consider, the dog marched into the bar without so much as looking to see if Phillis was following, and immediately lay down with his head on his paws.

'Why does he go in there?' said Phillis. 'And what is the place?'

She pushed the door, which, as usual in such establishments, hung half open by means of a leathern strap, and looked in. Nobody in the place but Cæsar. She entered, and tried to understand where she was. A smell of stale beer and stale tobacco hanging about the room smote her senses, and made her sick and faint. She saw the bottles and glasses, the taps and the counters, and she understood—she was in a drinking-place, one of the

wicked dens of which her guardian sometimes spoke. She was in a tavern, that is, a place where workmen spend their earnings and leave their families to starve. She looked round her with curiosity and a little fear.

Presently she became aware of the early-risen potboy, who, having taken down the shutters, was proceeding about his usual work behind the bar, when his eyes fell upon the astonishing sight of a young lady, a real young lady, as he saw at once, standing in the Bottle and Jug department. He then observed the dog, and comprehended that she was come there after Cæsar, and not for purposes of refreshment.

'Why, miss,' he said, 'Cæsar thinks he's out with the two gentlemen. He brings them here regular, you see, every morning, and they takes their little glass, don't they, Cæsar?'

Probably, thought watchful Phillis, anxious to learn,—probably a custom of polite life which Mr. Dyson had neglected to teach her. And yet he always spoke with such bitterness of public-houses.

'Will you take a drop of somethink, miss?' asked the polite assistant, tapping the handles hospitably. 'What shall it be?'

'I should like—' said Phillis.

'To be sure, it's full early,' the man went on, 'for a young lady and all. But Lor' bless your 'art, it's never none too early for most, when they've got the coin. Give it a name, miss, and there, the guvnor he isn't hup, and we won't chalk it down to you, nor never ask you for the money. On'y give it a name.'

'Thank you very much,' said Phillis. 'I *should* like to have a cup of tea, if I could take it outside.'

He shook his head, a gesture of disappointment.

'It can't be had here. Tea!'—as if he had thought better things of so much beauty—'Tea! Swipes! After all, miss, it's your way, and no doubt you don't know no better. There's a Early Caufy-'ouse a little way up the street. You must find it for yourself, because the dawg he don't know it; knows nothink about Tea, that dawg. You go out, miss, and Cæsar he'll go to.'

Phillis thanked him again for his attention, and followed his advice. Cæsar instantly got up and sallied forth with her. Instead, however, of returning to the square, he went straight on down Carnarvon-street, still leading the way. Turning first to the right and then to the left, he conducted Phillis through what seemed a labyrinth of streets. These were mostly streets of private houses, not of the best, but rather of the seediest. It was now nearly seven

o'clock, and the signs of life were apparent. The paper-boy was beginning, with the milkman, his rounds; the postman's foot was preparing for the first turn on his daily treadmill of doorsteps and double knocks. The workmen, paid by time, were strolling to their hours of idleness with bags of tools; windows were thrown open here and there; and an early servant might be seen rejoicing to bang her mats at the street-door. Phillis tried to retain her faith in Cæsar, and followed obediently. It was easy to see that the dog knew where he was going, and had a distinct purpose in his mind. It was to be hoped, she thought, that his purpose included a return home as soon as possible, because she was getting a little tired.

Streets—always streets. Who were the people who lived in them all? Could there be in every house the family life of which Mr. Dyson used to tell her—the life she had never seen, but which he promised she should one day see—the sweet life where father and mother and children live together and share their joys and sorrows? She began to look into the windows as she walked along, in the hope of catching a hasty glance at so much of the family life as might be seen so early in the morning.

She passed one house where the family were

distinctly visible, gathered together in the front kitchen. She stopped and looked down through the iron railings. The children were seated at the table. The mother was engaged in some cooking operations at the fire. Were they about to sing a hymn and to have family prayers before their breakfast? Not at this house apparently, for the woman suddenly turned from her occupation at the fire and, without any adequate motive that Phillis could discern, began boxing the children's ears all round. Instantly there arose a mighty cry from those alike who had already been boxed and those who sat expectant of their turn. Evidently this was one of the houses where the family life was not a complete success. The scene jarred on Phillis, upsetting her pretty little Arcadian castle of domestic happiness. She felt disappointed, and hurried on after her conductor.

It is sad to relate that Cæsar presently entered another public-house. This time Phillis went in after him with no hesitation at all. She encountered the landlord in person, who greeted the dog, asked him what he was doing so early, and then explained to Miss Fleming that he was accustomed to call at the house every day about noon, accompanied by two gentlemen, who had their little whack and then went away; and that she only had to go through the form

of coming and departing in order to get Cæsar out too.

'Little whack!' thought Phillis. 'Little glass! What a lot of customs and expressions I have to learn!'

For those interested in the sagacity of dogs, or in comparative psychology, it may be noted as a remarkable thing that when Cæsar came out of that second public-house he hesitated, as one struck suddenly with a grievous doubt. Had he been doing right? He took a few steps in advance, then he looked round and stopped, then he looked up and down the street. Finally he came back to Phillis, and asked for instructions with a wistful gaze.

Phillis turned round and said, 'Home, Cæsar.' Then, after barking twice, Cæsar led the way back again with alacrity and renewed confidence.

He not only led the way home, but he chose a short cut known only to himself. Perhaps he thought his charge might be tired; perhaps he wished to show her some further varieties of English life.

In the districts surrounding Bloomsbury are courts which few know except the policeman; even that dauntless functionary is chary of venturing himself into them, except in couples, and then he would

rather stay outside, if only out of respect to a playful custom, of old standing, prevalent among the inhabitants. They keep flower-pots on their first and second floors, and when a policeman passes through the court they drop them over. If no one is hurt, there is no need of an apology; if a constable receives the projectile on his head or shoulder, it is a deplorable accident which those who have caused it are the first to publicly lament. It was through a succession of these courts that the dog led Phillis.

Those of the men who had work to do were by this time gone to do it. Those who had none, together with those who felt strongly on the subject of Adam's curse and therefore wished for none, stayed at home and smoked pipes, leaning against the door-posts. The ideal heaven of these noble Englishmen is for ever to lean against door-posts and for ever to smoke pipes in a land where it is always balmy morning, and where there are 'houses' handy into which they can slouch from time to time for a drink.

The ladies, their consorts, were mostly engaged in such household occupations as could be carried on out of doors and within conversation reach of each other. The court was therefore musical with sweet feminine voices.

The children played together—no officer of the London School Board having yet ventured to face those awful flower-pots—in a continuous stream along the central line of the courts. Phillis observed that the same game was universal, and that the players were apparently all of the same age.

She also remarked a few things which struck her as worth noting. The language of the men differed considerably from that used by Mr. Dyson, and their pronunciation seemed to her to lack delicacy. The difference most prominent at first was the employment of a single adjective to qualify everything—an observance so universal as to arrest at once the attention of a stranger. The women, it was also apparent, were all engaged in singing together a kind of chorus of lamentation, in irregular strophe and antistrophe, on the wicked ways of their men.

Rough as were the natives of this place, no one molested Phillis. The men stared at her and exchanged criticisms on her personal appearance. These were complimentary, although not poetically expressed. The women stared harder, but said nothing until she had passed by. Then they made remarks which would have been unpleasant had they been audible. The children alone took no notice of her. The immunity from insult which belongs to

young ladies in English thoroughfares depends, I fear, more upon force of public opinion than upon individual chivalry. Una could trust herself alone with her lion ; she can only trust herself among the roughs of London when they are congregated in numbers. Nor, I think, would the spectacle of goodness and purity, combined with beauty, produce in their rude breasts, by comparison with themselves, those feelings of shame, opening up the way to repentance, which are expected by self-conscious maidens ministering in the paths of Dorcas.

Phillis walked along with steadfast eyes, watching everything and afraid of nothing, because she knew of no cause for fear. The dog, decreasing the distance between them, marched a few feet in advance, right through the middle of the children, who fell back and formed a lane for them to pass. Once Phillis stopped to look at a child—a great-eyed, soft-faced, curly-haired, beautiful boy. She spoke to him, asked him his name, held out her hand to him. The fathers and the mothers looked on and watched for the result, which would probably take the form of coin.

The boy prefaced his reply with an oath of great fulness and rich flavour. Phillis had never heard the phrase before, but it sounded unmusically on

her ears. Then he held out his hand and demanded a copper. The watchful parents and guardians on the door-steps murmured approval, and all the children shouted together like the men of Ephesus.

At this juncture Cæsar looked round. He mastered the situation in a moment, surrounded and isolated his convoy by a rapid movement almost simultaneous in flank and rear; barked angrily at the children, who threatened to close in *en masse* and make short work of poor Phillis; and gave her clearly to understand once for all that she was to follow him with silent and unquestioning docility.

She obeyed, and they came out of the courts and into the squares. Phillis began to hope that the Tower of London would presently heave in sight, or at least the silver Thames with London-bridge; but they did not.

She was very tired by this time. It was nearly eight, and she had been up and out since five. Even her vigorous young limbs were beginning to feel dragged by her three hours' ramble. Quite suddenly Cæsar turned a corner, as it seemed, and she found herself once more in Carnarvon-square. The dog, feeling that he had done enough for reputation, walked soberly along the pavement until he came to No. 15, when he ascended the steps and sat down.

The door was open, Jane the housemaid assiduously polishing the bell-handles.

'Lor' a mercy, miss!' she cried, 'I thought you was a-bed and asleep. Wherever have you a-bin—with Cæsar too?'

'We went for a walk and lost ourselves,' Phillis replied. 'Jane, I am very hungry; what time is breakfast?'

'The master has his at eight, miss. But Mr. Cornelius he told me yesterday that you would breakfast with him and Mr. Humphrey—about eleven, he said. And Mr. Humphrey thought you'd like a little fresh fish and a prawn curry, perhaps.'

'I shall breakfast with Mr. Joseph,' said Phillis.

She went to her room in a little temper. It was too bad to be treated like a child wanting nice things for breakfast. A little more experience taught her that any culinary forethought on the part of the Twins was quite sure to be so directed as to secure their own favourite dishes.

She did breakfast with Joseph: made tea for him, told him all about her morning adventures, received his admonitions in good part, and sent him to his office half an hour later than usual. One of his letters bore an American stamp. This he opened, putting the rest in a leather pocket-book.

'This letter concerns you, Miss Fleming,' he apologised in an old-fashioned way; 'that is why I opened it before you. It comes from your remaining guardian, Mr. Lawrence Colquhoun. Listen to what he says. He writes from New York: "I am sorry to hear that my old friend Abraham Dyson is gone. I shall be ready to assume my new responsibilities in a fortnight after you receive this letter, as I hope to land in that time at Liverpool. Meantime give my kindest regards to my ward." So—Lawrence Colquhoun home again!'

'Tell me about him: is he grave and old, like Mr. Dyson? Will he want me to go back to the old life and talk "subjects"? Mr. Jagenal, much as I loved my dear old guardian, I *could* not consent to be shut up any more.'

'You will not be asked, my dear young lady. Mr. Colquhoun is a man under forty. He is neither old nor grave. He was in the army with your father. He sold out seven or eight years ago, spent a year or two about London, and then disappeared. I am his lawyer, and from time to time he used to send me his address and draw on me for money. That is all I can tell you of his travels. Lawrence Colquhoun, Miss Fleming, was a popular man. Everybody liked him; especially the—the fair sex.'

'Was he very clever?'

'N-no; I should say *not* very clever. Not stupid. And, now one thinks of it, it is remarkable that he never was known to excel in anything, though he hunted, rode, shot, and did, I suppose, all the other things that young men in the army are fond of. He was fond of reading too, and had a considerable fund of information; but he never excelled in anything.'

Phillis shook her head.

'Mr. Dyson used to say that the people we like best are the people who are in our own line and have acknowledged their own inferiority to ourselves. Perhaps the reason why Mr. Colquhoun was liked was that he did not compete with the men who wished to excel, but contentedly took a second place.'

This was one of the bits of Dysonian philosophy with which Phillis occasionally graced her conversation, quoting it as reverently as if it had been a line from Shakespeare, sometimes with startling effect.

'I shall try to like him. I am past nineteen, and at twenty-one I shall be my own mistress. If I do not like him, I shall not live with him any longer after that.'

'I think you will not, in any case, live at Mr. Colquhoun's residence,' said Joseph; 'but I am sure you will like him.'

'A fortnight to wait.'

'You must not be shy of him,' Joseph went on; 'you have nothing to be afraid of. Think highly of yourself, to begin with.'

'I do,' said Phillis; 'Mr. Dyson always tried to make me think highly of myself. He told me my education was better than that of any girl he knew. Of course that was partly his kind way of encouraging me. Mr. Dyson said that shyness was a kind of cowardice or else a kind of vanity. People who are afraid of other people, he said, either mistrust themselves or think they are not rated at their true value. But I think I am not at all afraid of strangers. Do I look like being afraid?' She drew herself up to her full height and smiled a conscious superiority. 'Perhaps you will think that I rate myself too highly.'

'That,' said Joseph, with a compliment really creditable for a beginner,—'that would be difficult, Miss Fleming.'

When the Twins prepared to take their morning walk at twelve an unexpected event happened. Cæsar, for the first time on record, and for no reason apparent or assigned, refused to accompany them. They went out without him, feeling lonely, unhappy, and a little unprotected. They passed the Carnarvon Arms

without a word. At the next halting-place they entered the bar in silence, glancing guiltily at each other. Could it be that the passion for drink, divested of its usual trappings of pretence, presented itself suddenly to the brethren in its horrid ugliness? They came out with shamefaced looks, and returned home earlier than usual. They were perfectly sober, and separated without the usual cheery allusions to Work. Perhaps the conscience was touched, for when Jane took up their tea she found the Poet in his Workshop sitting at the table, and the Artist in his Studio standing at his easel. Before the one was a blank sheet of paper; before the other was a blank canvas. Both were fractious, and both found fault with the tea. After dinner they took a bottle of port, which, Humphrey said, they really felt to want.

CHAPTER VI.

'I do not know
One of my sex; no woman's face remember
Save, from my glass, mine own.'

In the afternoon Phillis, who was 'writing up' her diary after the manner of the ancient Aztec, received a visitor. For the first time in her life the girl found herself face to face with—a lady. Men she knew—chiefly men of advanced age; they came to dine with Abraham Dyson. Women-servants she knew, for she had a French maid—imported too young to be mischievous; and there had been a cook at Highgate, with two or three maids. Not one of these virgins possessed the art of reading, or they would never have been engaged by Mr. Dyson. Nor was she encouraged by her guardian to talk with them. Also she knew that in the fulness of time she was to be somehow transferred from the exclusive society of men to that in which the leading part would be taken by ladies—women brought up delicately like herself, but not all, unhappily, on the same sound fundamental principle of oral teaching.

Among the loose odds and ends which remained in Mr. Dyson's portfolios, and where lay all that Joseph Jagenal could ever find to help in completing his great system of education, was the following scrap:

'Women brought up with women are hindered in their perfect development. Let the girls be separated from the society of their sex, and be educated mostly among men. In this way the receptivity of the feminine mind may be turned to best account in the acquirement of robust masculine ideas. Every girl may become a mother; let her therefore sit among men and listen.'

Perhaps this deprivation of the society of her own sex was a greater loss to Phillis than her ignorance of reading. Consider what it entailed. She grew up without the most rudimentary notions of the great art of flirtation; she had never even heard of looking out for an establishment; she had no idea of considering every young man as a possible husband; she had, indeed, no glimmerings, not the faintest streak of dawning twilight, in the matter of love; while as for angling, hooking a big fish and landing him, she was no better than a heathen Hottentot. This was the most important loss, but there were others: she knew how to dress, partly by instinct, partly by looking at pictures; but she knew

nothing about Making-up. Nature, which gave her the figure of Hebe, made this loss insignificant to her, though it is perhaps the opinion of Mr. Worth that there is no figure so good but Art can improve it. But not to *know* about Making-up is, for a woman, to lose a large part of useful sympathy for other women.

Again, she knew nothing of the way in which girls pour little confidences, all about trifles, into each other's ears; she had not cultivated that intelligence which girls can only learn from each other, and which enables them to communicate volumes with a half-lifted eyelid; she had a man's way of saying out what she thought, and even, so far as her dogmatic training permitted, of thinking for herself. She did not understand the mystery with which women enwrap themselves, partly working on the imagination of youth, and partly through their love of secluded talk—a remnant of barbaric times, and a proof of the subjection of the sex; the *frou-frou* of life was lost to her. And being without mystery, without the art of flirtation, with nothing to hide and no object to gain, Phillis was entirely free from the great vice into which women of the weaker nature are apt to fall—she was perfectly and wholly truthful.

And now she was about to make acquaintance for the first time with a lady—one of her own sex and of her own station.

I suppose Phillis must have preserved the characteristic instincts of her womanhood, despite her extraordinary training, because the first thing she observed was that her visitor was dressed in a style quite beyond her power of conception and imperfect taste. So she generalised from an individual case, and jumped at the notion that here was a very superior woman indeed.

The superiority was in the 'young person' at Melton & Mowbray's, who designed the dress; but that Phillis did not know.

A more remarkable point with Mrs. Cassilis, Phillis's visitor, than her dress was her face. It was so regular as to be faultless. It might have been modelled, and so have served for a statue. It was also as cold as a face of marble. Men have prayed —men who have fallen into feminine traps—to be delivered from every species of woman except the cold woman; even King Solomon, who had great opportunities, including long life, of studying the sex, mentions her not; and yet I think that she is the worst of all. Lord, give us tender-hearted wives! When we carve our ideal woman in marble, we do

not generally choose the wise Minerva nor the chaste Diana, but Venus, soft-eyed, lissom, tender—and generally true.

Mrs. Cassilis called. As she entered the room she saw a tall and beautiful girl, with eyes of a deep brown, who rose to greet her with a little timidity. She was taken by surprise. She expected to find a rough and rather vulgar young woman, of no style and unformed manners. She saw before her a girl whose attitude spoke unmistakably of delicacy and culture. Whatever else Miss Fleming might be, she was clearly a lady. That was immediately apparent; and Mrs. Cassilis was not likely to make a mistake on a point of such vital importance. A young lady of graceful figure, most attractive face, and, which was all the more astonishing, considering her education, perfectly dressed. Phillis, in fact, was attired in the same simple morning costume in which she had taken her early morning walk. On the table before her were her sketch-book and her pencils.

Mrs. Cassilis was dressed, for her part, in robes which it had taken the highest talent of Regent-street to produce. Her age was about thirty. Her cold face shone for a moment with the wintry light of a forced smile, but her eyes did not soften, as she took Phillis's hand.

Phillis's pulse beat a little faster, in spite of her courage.

Art face to face with Nature. The girl just as she left her nunnery, ignorant of mankind, before the perfect woman of the world. They look curiously in each other's eyes. Now the first lesson taught by the world is the way to dissemble. Mrs. Cassilis said to herself, 'Here is a splendid girl. She is not what I expected to see. This is a girl to cultivate and bring out—a girl to do one credit.' But she said aloud:

'Miss Fleming? I am sure it is. You are *exactly* the sort of girl I expected.'

Then she sat down and looked at her comfortably.

'I am the wife of your late guardian's nephew—Mr. Gabriel Cassilis. You have never met him yet; but I hope you will very soon make his acquaintance.'

'Thank you,' said Phillis simply.

'We used to think, until Mr. Dyson died and his preposterous will was read, that his eccentric behaviour was partly your fault. But when we found that he had left you nothing, of course we felt that we had done you an involuntary wrong. And the will was made when you were a mere child, and could have no voice or wish in the matter.'

'I had plenty of money,' said Phillis; 'why should poor Mr. Dyson want to leave me any more?'

Quite untaught. As if any one could have too much money!

'Forty thousand pounds a year! and all going to Female education. Not respectable Female education. If it had been left to Girton College, or even to finding bread-and-butter, with the Catechism and Contentment, for charity girls in poke bonnets, it would have been less dreadful. But to bring up young ladies as you were brought up, my poor Miss Fleming—'

'Am I not respectable?' asked Phillis, as humbly as a West Indian nigger before emancipation asking if he was not a man and a brother.

'My dear child, I hear you cannot even read and write.'

'That is quite true.'

'But everybody learns to read and write. All the Sunday-school children even know how to read and write.'

'Perhaps that is a misfortune for the Sunday-school children,' Phillis calmly observed; 'it would very likely be better for the Sunday-school children were they taught more useful things.' Here Phillis was plagiarising—using Mr. Dyson's own words.

'At least every one in society knows them. Miss Fleming, I am ten years older than you, and, if you will only trust me, I will give you such advice and assistance as I can.'

'You are very kind,' said Phillis, with a little distrust, of which she was ashamed. 'I know that I must be very ignorant, because I have already seen so much that I never suspected before. If you will only tell me of my deficiencies I will try to repair them. And I can learn reading and writing any time, you know, if it is at all necessary.'

'Then let us consider. My poor girl, I fear you have to learn the very rudiments of society. Of course you are quite ignorant of things that people talk about. Books are out of the question. Music and concerts; art and pictures; china—perhaps Mr. Dyson collected?'

'No.'

'A pity. China would be a great help; the opera and theatres; balls and dancing; the rink—'

'What is the rink?' asked Phillis.

'The latest addition to the arts of flirtation and killing time. Perhaps you can fall back upon Church matters. Are you a Ritualist?'

'What is that?'

'My dear girl'—Mrs. Cassilis looked unutterable

horror as a thought struck her—'did you actually never go to church?'

'No. Mr. Dyson used to read prayers every day. Why should people go to church when they pray?'

'Why? why? Because people in society all go; because you must set an example to the lower orders. Dear me! It is very shocking; and girls are all expected to take such an interest in religion. But the first thing is to learn reading.'

She had been carrying a little box in her hands all this time, which she now placed on the table and opened. It contained small wooden squares, with gaudy pictures pasted on them.

'This is a Pictorial Alphabet: an introduction to all education. Let me show you how to use it. What is this?'

She held up one square.

'It is a very bad picture, abominably coloured, of a hatchet or a kitchen chopper.'

'An axe, my dear—A, x, E. The initial letter A is below in its two forms. And this?'

'That is worse. I suppose it is meant for a cow. What a cow!'

'Bull, my dear—B, U, L, L, bull. The initial B is below.'

'And is this,' asked Phillis, with great contempt,

'the way to learn reading? A kitchen chopper stands for A, and a cow with her legs out of drawing stands for B. Unless I can draw my cows for myself, Mrs. Cassilis, I shall not try to learn reading.'

'You can draw, then?'

'I draw a little,' said Phillis. 'Not so well, of course, as girls brought up respectably.'

'Pardon me, my dear Miss Fleming, if I say that sarcasm is not considered good style. It fails to attract.'

Good style, thought Phillis, means talking so as to attract.

'Do let me draw you,' said Phillis. Her temper was not faultless, and it was rising by degrees, so that she wanted the relief of silence. 'Do let me draw you as you sit there.'

She did not wait for permission, but sketched in a few moments a profile portrait of her visitor, in which somehow the face, perfectly rendered in its coldness and strength, was without the look which its owner always thought was there—the look which invites sympathy. The real unsympathetic nature, caught in a moment by some subtle artist's touch, was there instead. Mrs. Cassilis looked at it, and an angry flush crossed her face, which Phillis, wondering why, noted.

'You caricature extremely well. I congratulate you on that power, but it is a dangerous accomplishment—even more dangerous than the practice of sarcasm. The girl who indulges in the latter at most fails to attract; but the caricaturist repels.'

'O!' said Phillis, innocent of any attempt to caricature, but trying to assimilate this strange dogmatic teaching.

'We must always remember that the most useful weapons in a girl's hands are those of submission, faith, and reverence. Men hate—they hate and detest—women who think for themselves. They positively loathe the woman who dares turn them into ridicule.'

She looked as if she could be one of the few who possess that daring.

'Fortunately,' she went on, 'such women are rare. Even among the strong-minded crew, the shrieking sisterhood, most of them are obliged to worship some man or other of their own school.'

'I don't understand. Pardon me, Mrs. Cassilis, that I am so stupid. I say what I think, and you tell me I am sarcastic.'

'Girls in society never say what they think. They assent or at best ask a question timidly.'

'And I make a little pencil sketch of you, and you tell me I am a caricaturist.'

'Girls who can draw must draw in the conventional manner recognised by society. They do not draw likenesses; they copy flowers, and sometimes draw angels and crosses. To please men they draw soldiers and horses.'

'But why cannot girls draw what they please? And why must they try to attract?'

Mrs. Cassilis looked at this most innocent of girls with misgiving. *Could* she be so ignorant as she seemed, or was she pretending?

'Why? Phillis Fleming, only ask me that question again in six months' time if you dare.'

Phillis shook her head; she was clearly out of her depth.

'Have you any other accomplishments?'

'I am afraid not. I can play a little. Mr. Dyson liked my playing; but it is all from memory and from ear.'

'Will you, if you do not mind, play something to me?'

Victoria Cassilis cared no more for music than the deaf adder which hath no understanding. By dint of much teaching, however, she had learned to execute creditably. The playing of Phillis, sweet,

spontaneous, and full of feeling, had no power to touch her heart.

'Ye-yes,' she said, 'that is the sort of playing which some young men like: not those young men from Oxford, who "follow" Art, and pretend to understand good music. You may see them asleep at afternoon recitals. You must play at small parties only, Phillis. Can you sing?'

'I sing as I play,' said Phillis, rising and shutting the piano. 'That is only, I suppose, for small parties.' The colour came into her cheeks, and her brown eyes brightened. She was accustomed to think that her playing gave pleasure. Then she reproached herself for ingratitude, and she asked pardon. 'I am cross with myself for being so deficient. Pray forgive me, Mrs. Cassilis. It is very kind of you to take all this trouble.'

'My dear, you are a hundred times better than I expected.'

Phillis remembered what she had said ten minutes before, but was silent.

'A hundred times better. Can you dance, my dear?'

'No. Antoinette tells me how she used to dance with the villagers when she was a little girl at Yport.'

'That can be easily learned. Do you ride?'

At any other time Phillis would have replied in the affirmative. Now she only asserted a certain power of sticking on, acquired on pony-back and in a paddock. Mrs. Cassilis sighed.

'After all, a few lessons will give you a becoming seat. Nothing so useful as clever horsemanship. But how shall we disguise the fact that you cannot read or write?'

'I shall not try to disguise it,' Phillis cried, jealous for Mr. Dyson's good name.

'Well, my dear, we come now to the most important question of all. Where do you get your dresses?'

'O Mrs. Cassilis, do not say that my dresses are calculated to repel!' cried poor Phillis, her spirit quite broken by this time. 'Antoinette and I made this one between us. Sometimes I ordered them at Highgate, but I like my own best.'

Mrs. Cassilis put up a pair of double eyeglasses, because they were now arrived at a really critical stage of the catechism. There was something in the simple dress which forced her admiration. It was quite plain, and, compared with her own, as a daisy is to a dahlia.

'It is a very nice dress,' she said critically.

'Whether it is your figure, or your own taste, or the material, I do not know; but you are dressed *perfectly*, Miss Fleming. No young lady could dress better.'

Women meet on the common ground of dress. Phillis blushed with pleasure. At all events she and her critic had something on which they could agree.

'I will come to-morrow morning, and we will examine your wardrobe together, if you will allow me; and then we will go to Melton & Mowbray's. And I will write to Mr. Jagenal, asking him to bring you to dinner in the evening, if you will come.'

'I should like it very much,' said Phillis. 'But you have made me a little afraid.'

'You need not be afraid at all. And it will be a very small party. Two or three friends of my husband's, and two men, who have just come home and published a book, which is said to be clever. One is a brother of Lord Isleworth, Mr. Ronald Dunquerque, and the other is a Captain Ladds. You have only to listen and look interested.'

'Then I will come. And it is very kind of you, Mrs. Cassilis, especially since you do not like me.'

That was quite true, but not a customary thing to be said. Phillis perceived dislike in the tones of her

visitor's voice, in her eyes, in her manner. Did Mrs. Cassilis dislike her for her fresh and unsophisticated nature, or for her beauty, or for the attractiveness which breathed from every untaught look and gesture of the girl? Swedenborg taught that the lower nature cannot love the nobler; that the highest heavens are open to all who like to go there, but the atmosphere is found congenial to very few.

'Not like you!' Mrs. Cassilis, hardly conscious of any dislike, answered after her kind. 'My dear, I hope we shall like each other very much. Do not let fancies get into your pretty head. I shall try to be your friend, if you will let me.'

Again the wintry smile upon the lips, and the lifting of the cold eyes, which smiled not.

But Phillis was deceived by the warmth of the words. She took her visitor's hand and kissed it. The act was a homage to the woman of superior knowledge.

'O yes,' she murmured, 'if you only will.'

'I shall call you Phillis. My name is Victoria.'

'And you will tell me more about girls in society.'

'I will show you girls in society, which is a great deal better for you,' said Mrs. Cassilis.

'I looked at the girls I saw yesterday as we drove through the streets. Some of them were walking like this.' She had been standing during most of this conversation, and now she began walking across the room in that ungraceful pose of the body which was more affected last year than at present. Ladies do occasionally have intervals of lunacy in the matter of taste, but if you give them time they come round again. Even crinolines went out at last, after the beauty of a whole generation had been spoiled by them. 'Then there were others, who walked like this.' She laid her head on one side, and affected a languid air, which I have myself remarked as being prevalent in the High-street of Islington. Now the way from Highgate to Carnarvon-square lies through that thoroughfare. 'Then there were the boys. I never dreamed of such a lot of boys. And they were all whistling. This was the tune.'

She threw her head back, and began to whistle the popular song of last spring. You know what it was. It came between the favourite air from the *Fille de Madame Angot* and that other sweet melody, 'Tommy, make room for your Uncle,' and was called 'Hold the Fort.' It refreshed the souls of Revivalists in her Majesty's Theatre, and of all the street-boys in this great Babylon.

Mrs. Cassilis positively shrieked:

'My dear, *dear*, DEAR girl,' she cried, 'you MUST not whistle!'

'Is it wrong to whistle?'

'Not morally wrong, I suppose. Girls never do anything morally wrong. But it is far worse, Phillis, far worse; it is unspeakably vulgar.'

'O,' said Phillis, 'I am so sorry!'

'And, my dear, one thing more. Do not cultivate the power of mimicry, which you undoubtedly possess. Men are afraid of young ladies who can imitate them. For actresses, authors, artists, and common people of that sort, of course it does not matter. But for us it is different.

'And now, Phillis, I must leave you till to-morrow. I have great hopes of you. You have an excellent figure, a very pretty and attractive face, winning eyes, and a taste in dress which only wants cultivation. And that we will begin to-morrow at Melton & Mowbray's.'

'O yes,' said Phillis, clapping her hands, 'that will be delightful! I have never seen a Shop yet.'

'She has—never—seen—a Shop!' cried Mrs. Cassilis. 'Child, it is hard indeed to realise your Awful condition of mind. That a girl of nineteen

should be able to say that she has never seen a Shop! My dear, your education has been absolutely un-Christian. And poor Mr. Dyson, I fear, cut off suddenly in his sins, without the chance of repentance.'

CHAPTER VII.

'Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear.'

Joseph Jagenal and his charge were the last arrivals at Mrs. Cassilis's dinner. It was not a large party. There were two ladies of the conventional type, well dressed, well looking, and not particularly interesting; with them their two husbands, young men of an almost preternatural solemnity—such solemnity as sometimes results from a too concentrated attention to the Money Market. They were there as friends of Mr. Cassilis, whom they regarded with the reverence justly due to success. They longed to speak to him privately on investments, but did not dare. There were also two lions, newly captured. Ladds, the 'Dragoon' of the joint literary venture—'The Little Sphere, by the Dragoon and the Younger Son'—is standing in that contemplative attitude by which hungry men, awaiting the announcement of dinner, veil an indecent eagerness to begin. The other, the 'Younger Son,' is talking to Mr. Cassilis.

Phillis remarked that the room was furnished in a manner quite beyond anything she knew. Where would be the dingy old chairs, sofas, and tables of Mr. Dyson's, or the solid splendour of Joseph Jagenal's drawing-room, compared with the glories of decorative art which Mrs. Cassilis had called to her aid? She had no time to make more than a general survey as she went to greet her hostess.

Mrs. Cassilis, for her part, observed that Phillis was dressed carefully, and was looking her best. She had on a simple white dress of that soft stuff called, I think, Indian muslin, which falls in graceful folds. A pale lavender sash relieved the monotony of the white, and set off her shapely figure. Her hair, done up in the simplest fashion, was adorned with a single white rose. Her cheeks were a little flushed with excitement, but her eyes were steady.

Phillis stole a glance at the other ladies. They were dressed, she was glad to observe, in the same style as herself, but not better. That naturally raised her spirits.

Then Mrs. Cassilis introduced her husband.

When Phillis next day attempted to reproduce her impressions of the evening, she had no difficulty in recording the likeness of Mr. Gabriel Cassilis with great fidelity. He was exactly like old Time.

The long lean limbs, the pronounced features, the stooping figure, the forelock which our enemy will *not* allow us to take, the head bald save for that single ornamental curl and a fringe of gray hair over the ears — all the attributes of Time were there except the scythe. Perhaps he kept that at his office.

He was a very rich man. His house was in Kensington-palace-gardens, a fact which speaks volumes; its furnishing was a miracle of modern art; his paintings were undoubted; his portfolios of water-colours were worth many thousands; and his horses were perfect.

He was a director of many companies—but you cannot live in Kensington-palace-gardens by directing companies—and he had an office in the City which consisted of three rooms. In the first were four or five clerks, always writing; in the second was the secretary, always writing; in the third was Mr. Gabriel Cassilis himself, always giving audience.

He married at sixty-three, because he wanted an establishment in his old age. He was too old to expect love from a woman, and too young to fall in love with a girl. He did not marry in order to make a pet of his wife—indeed, he might as well have tried stroking a statue of Minerva as petting Victoria

Pengelley; and he made no secret of his motive in proposing for the young lady. As delicately as possible he urged that, though her family was good, her income was small; that it is better to be rich and married than poor and single; and he offered, if she consented to become his wife, to give her all that she could wish for or ask on the material and artistic side of life.

Victoria Pengelley, on receipt of the offer, which was communicated by a third person, her cousin, behaved very strangely. She first refused absolutely; then she declared that she would have taken the man, but that it was now impossible; then she retracted the last statement, and, after a week of agitation, accepted the offer.

'And I must say, Victoria,' said her cousin, 'that you have made a strange fuss about accepting an offer from one of the richest men in London. He is elderly, it is true; but the difference between eight-and-twenty and sixty lies mostly in the imagination. I will write to Mr. Cassilis to-night.'

Which she did, and they were married.

She trembled a great deal during the marriage ceremony. Mr. Cassilis was pleased at this appearance of emotion, which he attributed to causes quite remote from any thought in the lady's mind. 'Calm

to all outward seeming,' he said to himself, 'Victoria is capable of the deepest passion.'

They had now been married between two and three years. They had one child—a boy.

It is only to be added that Mr. Cassilis settled the sum of fifteen thousand pounds upon the wedding-day on his wife, and that they lived together in that perfect happiness which is to be expected from well-bred people who marry without pretending to love each other.

Their dinners were beyond praise; the wine was incomparable; but their evenings were a little frigid. A sense of cold splendour filled the house—the chill which belongs to new things and to new men.

The new man thirty years ago was loud, ostentatious, and vulgar. The new man now—there are a great many more of them—is very often quiet, unpretending, and well bred. He understands art, and is a patron; he enjoys the advantages which his wealth affords him; he knows how to bear his riches with dignity and with reserve. The only objection to him is that he wants to go where other men, who were new in the last generation, go, and do what they do.

Mr. Cassilis welcomed Miss Fleming and Joseph Jagenal, and resumed his conversation with Jack

Dunquerque. That young man looked much the same as when we saw him last on the slopes of the Sierra Nevada. His tall figure had not filled out, but his slight moustache had just a little increased in size. And now he looked a good deal bored.

'I have never, I confess,' his host was saying, wielding a double eyeglass instead of his scythe,—'I have never been attracted by the manners and customs of uncivilised people. My sympathies cease, I fear, where Banks end.'

'You are only interested in the country of Lombardy?'

'Yes; very good: precisely so.'

'Outside the pale of Banks men certainly carry their money about with them—'

'Which prevents the accumulation of wealth, my dear sir. Civilisation was born when men learned to confide in each other. Modern history begins with the Fuggers, of whom you may have read.'

'I assure you I never did,' said Jack truthfully.

Then dinner was announced.

Phillis found herself on the right of Mr. Cassilis. Next to her sat Captain Ladds. Mr. Dunquerque was at the opposite corner of the table—he had given his arm to Mrs. Cassilis.

Mrs. Cassilis, Phillis saw, was watching her by occasional glances. The girl felt a little anxious, but she was not awkward. After all, she thought, the customs of society at a dinner-table cannot be very different from those observed and taught her by Mr. Dyson. Perhaps her manner of adjusting things was a little wanting in finish and delicacy—too downright. Also, Mrs. Cassilis observed, she made no attempt to talk with Captain Ladds, her neighbour, but was, curiously enough, deeply interested in the conversation of Mr. Cassilis.

Ladds was too young for Phillis, despite his five-and-thirty years. Old men and graybeards she knew. Young men she did not know. She could form no guess what line of talk would be adopted by a young man—one who had a deep bass voice when he spoke, and attacked his dinner with a vigour past understanding. Phillis was interested in him, and a little afraid lest he should talk to her.

Others watched her too. Jack Dunquerque, his view a little intercepted by the *épergne*, lifted furtive glances at the bright and pretty girl at the other end of the table. Joseph Jagenal looked at her with honest pride in the beauty of his ward.

They talked politics, but not in the way to which she was accustomed. Mr. Dyson and his brother

graybeards were like Cassandra, Elijah, Jeremiah, and a good many prophets of the present day, inasmuch as the more they discussed affairs the more they prophesied disaster. So that Phillis had learned from them to regard the dreadful future with terror. Every day seemed to make these sages more dismal. Phillis had not yet learned that the older we get the wiser we grow, and the wiser we grow the more we tremble; that those are most light-hearted who know the least. At this table politics were talked in a very different manner: they laughed where the sages wagged their heads and groaned: they even discussed, with a familiarity which seemed to drive out anxiety, the favourite bugbear of her old politicians, the continental supremacy of Germany.

The two young City men, who were as solemn as a pair of Home Secretaries, listened to their host with an eager interest and deference which the other two, who were not careful about investments, did not imitate. Phillis observed the difference, and wondered what it meant. Then Mr. Cassilis, as if he had communicated as many ideas about Russia as he thought desirable, turned the conversation upon travelling, in the interests of the Dragoon and the Younger Son.

'I suppose,' he said, addressing Jack, 'that in

your travels among the islanders you practised the primitive mode of Barter.'

'We did; and they cheated us when they could. Which shows that they have improved upon the primitive man. I suppose he was honest.'

'I should think not,' said the host. 'The most honest classes in the world are the richest. People who want to get things always have a tendency to be dishonest. England is the most honest nation, because it is the richest. France is the next. Germany, you see, which is a poor country, yielded to the temptations of poverty and took Sleswick-Holstein, Alsace, and Lorraine. I believe that men began with dishonesty.'

'Adam, for example,' said Ladds, 'took what he ought not to have taken.'

'O Captain Ladds!'—this was one of the two ladies, she who had read up the new book before coming to the dinner, and had so far an advantage over the other—'that is just like one of the wicked things, the delightfully wicked things, in the *Little Sphere*. Now we know which of the two did the wicked things.'

'It was the other man,' said Ladds.

'Is it fair to ask,' the lady went on, 'how you wrote the book?'

She was one of those who, could she get the chance, would ask Messieurs Erckmann and Chatrian themselves to furnish her with a list of the paragraphs and the ideas due to each in their last novel.

Ladds looked as if the question was beyond his comprehension.

At last he answered slowly,

'Steel pen. The other man had a gold pen.'

'No—no; I mean, did you write one chapter and your collaborateur the next, or how?'

'Let me think it over,' replied Ladds, as if it were a conundrum.

Mrs. Cassilis came to the rescue.

'At all events,' she said, 'the great thing is that the book is a success. I have not read it, but I hear there are many clever and witty things in it. Also some wicked things. Of course, if you write wickedness you are sure of an audience. I don't think, Mr. Dunquerque,' she added, with a smile, 'that it is the business of gentlemen to attack existing institutions.'

Jack shook his head.

'It was not my writing. It was the other man. I did what I could to tone him down.'

'Have you read the immortal work?' Ladds

asked his neighbour. He had not spoken to her yet, but he had eyes in his head, and he was gradually getting interested in the silent girl who sat beside him, and listened with such rapt interest to the conversation.

This great and manifest interest was the only sign to show that Phillis was not accustomed to dinners in society.

Ladds thought that she must be some shy maiden from the country—a little 'rustical' perhaps. He noticed now that her eyes were large and bright, that her features were clear and delicate, that she was looking at himself with a curious pity, as if, which was indeed the case, she believed the statement about his having written the wicked things. And then he wondered how so bright a girl had been able to listen to the prosy dogmatics of Mr. Cassilis. Yet she had listened, and with pleasure.

Phillis was at that stage in her worldly education when she would have listened with pleasure to anybody—Mr. Moody, a lecture on astronomy, a penny-reading, an amateur dramatic performance, or an essay in the *Edinburgh*. For everything was new. She was like the blind man who received his sight and saw men, like trees, walking. Every new face

was a new world; every fresh speaker was a new revelation. No one to her was stupid, was a bore, was insincere, was spiteful, was envious, or a humbug, because no one was known. To him who does not know, the inflated indiarubber toy is as solid as a cannon-ball.

'I never read anything,' said Phillis, with a half blush. Not that she was ashamed of the fact, but she felt that it would have pleased Captain Ladds had she read his book. 'You see, I have never learned to read.'

'O!'

It was rather a facer to Ladds. Here was a young lady, not being a Spaniard, or a Sicilian, or a Levantine, or a Mexican, or a Paraguayan, or a Brazilian, or belonging to any country where such things are possible, who boldly confessed that she could not read. This in England; this in the year 1875; this in a country positively rendered unpleasant by reason of its multitudinous School Boards and the echoes of their wrangling!

Jack Dunquerque, in his place, heard the statement and looked up involuntarily, as if to see what manner of young lady this could be—a gesture of surprise into which the incongruity of the thing startled him. He caught her full face as she leaned

a little forward, and his glance rested for a moment on a cheek so fair that his spirit fell. Beauty disarms the youthful squire, and arms him who has worn his spurs. I speak in an allegory.

Mrs. Cassilis heard it, and was half amused, half angry.

Mr. Cassilis heard it, opened his mouth, as if to make some remark about Mr. Dyson's method of education, but thought better of it.

The two ladies heard it and glanced at her curiously. Then they looked at each other with the slightest uplifting of the eyebrow, which meant, 'Who on earth can she be?'

Mrs. Cassilis noted that too, and rejoiced, because she was going to bring forward a girl who would make everybody jealous.

Ladds was the only one who spoke.

'That,' he said feebly, 'must be very jolly.'

He began to wonder what could be the reason of this singular educational omission. Perhaps she had a crooked back; could not sit up to a desk; could not hold a book in her hand; but no, she was like Petruchio's Kate:

> 'Like the hazel twig,
> As straight and slender.'

Perhaps her eyes were weak; but no, her eyes were

sparkling with the 'right Promethean fire.' Perhaps she was of weak intellect; but that was ridiculous.

Then the lady who had read the book began to ask more questions. I do not know anything more irritating than to be asked questions about your own book.

'Will you tell us, Mr. Dunquerque, if the story of the bear-hunt is a true one, or did you make it up?'

'We made up nothing. That story is perfectly true. And the man's name was Beck.'

'Curious,' said Mr. Cassilis. 'An American named Beck, Mr. Gilead P. Beck, is in London now, and has been recommended to me. He is extremely rich. I think, my dear, that you invited him to dinner to-day?'

'Yes. He found he could not come at the last moment. He will be here in the evening.'

'Then you will see the very man,' said Jack, 'unless there is more than one Gilead P. Beck, which is hardly likely.'

'This man has practically an unlimited credit,' said the host.

'And talks, I suppose, like—well, like the stage Americans, I suppose,' said his wife.

'You know,' Jack explained, 'that the stage

American is all nonsense. The educated American talks a great deal better than we do. He can string his sentences together ; we can only bark.'

'Perhaps our bark is better than their bite,' Ladds remarked.

'A man who has unlimited credit may talk as he pleases,' said Mr. Cassilis dogmatically.

The two solemn young men murmured assent.

'And he always did say that he was going to have luck. He carried about a Golden Butterfly in a box.'

'How deeply interesting!' replied the lady who had read the book. 'And is that other story true, that you found an English traveller living all alone in a deserted city?'

'Quite true.'

'Really! And who was it? Anybody one has met?'

'I do not know whether you have ever met him. His name is Lawrence Colquhoun.'

Mrs. Cassilis flushed suddenly, and then her pale face became paler.

'Lawrence Colquhoun, formerly of ours,' said Ladds, looking at her.

Mrs. Cassilis read the look to ask what business it was of hers, and why she changed colour at his name.

'Colquhoun!' she said softly. Then she raised

her voice and addressed her husband: 'My dear, it is an old friend of mine of whom we are speaking, Mr. Lawrence Colquhoun.'

'Yes!' he had forgotten the name. 'What did he do? I think I remember—' He stopped, for he remembered to have heard his wife's name in connection with this man. He felt a sudden pang of jealousy, a quite new and rather curious sensation. It passed, but yet he rejoiced that the man was out of England.

'He is my guardian,' Phillis said to Ladds. 'And you actually know him? Will you tell me something about him presently?'

When the men followed, half an hour later, they found the four ladies sitting in a large semicircle round the fire. The centre of the space so formed was occupied by a gentleman who held a cup of tea in one hand and declaimed with the other. That is to say, he was speaking in measured tones, and as if he were addressing a large room instead of four ladies; and his right hand and arm performed a pump-handle movement to assist and grace his delivery. He had a face so grave that it seemed as if smiles were impossible; he was apparently about forty years of age. Mrs. Cassilis was not listening much. She was considering, as she looked at her visitor, how far he

might be useful to her evenings. Phillis was catching every word that fell from the stranger's lips. Here was an experience quite new and startling. She knew of America; Mr. Dyson, born not so very many years after the War of Independence, and while the memory of its humiliations was fresh in the mind of the nation, always thought and spoke of Americans as England's hereditary and implacable enemies. Yet here was one of the race talking amicably and making no hostile demonstrations whatever. So that another of her collection of early impressions evidently needed reconsideration.

When he saw the group at the door, Mr. Gilead Beck—for it was he—strode hastily across the room, and putting aside Mr. Cassilis, seized Jack Dunquerque by the hand and wrung it for several moments.

'You have not forgotten me?' he said. 'You remember that lucky shot? You still think of that Grisly?'

'Of course I do,' said Jack; 'I shall never forget him.'

'Nor shall I, sir; never.' And then he went through the friendly ceremony with Ladds.

'You are the other man, sir?'

'I always am the other man,' said Ladds for the

second time that evening. 'How are you, Mr. Beck, and how is the Golden Butterfly?'

'That Inseck, captain, is a special instrument working under Providence for my welfare. He slumbers at my hotel, the Langham, in a fire-proof safe.'

Then he seized Jack Dunquerque's arm and led him to the circle round the fire.

'Ladies, this young gentleman is my preserver. He saved my life. It is owing to Mr. Dunquerque that Gilead P. Beck has the pleasure of being in this drawing-room.'

'O Mr. Dunquerque,' said the lady who had read the book, 'that is not in the volume.'

'Clawed I should have been, mauled I should have been, rubbed out I should have been on that green and grassy spot, but for the crack of Mr. Dunquerque's rifle. You will not believe me, ladies, but I thought it was the crack of doom.'

'It was a most charming picturesque spot in which to be clawed,' said Jack, laughing. 'You could not have selected a more delightful place for the purpose.'

'Their air moments,' said Mr. Beck, looking round the room solemnly and letting his eyes rest on Phillis, who gazed at him with an excitement and interest she could hardly control, — 'there air moments

when the soul is dead to poetry. One of those moments is when you feel the breath of a Grisly on your cheek. Even you, young lady, would, at such a moment, lose your interest in the beauty of Nature.'

Phillis started when he addressed her.

'Did he save your life?' she asked, with flashing eyes.

Jack Dunquerque blushed as this fair creature turned to him with looks of such admiration and respect as the queen of the tournament bestowed upon the victor of the fight. So Desdemona gazed upon the Moor when he spake

> 'Of most disastrous chances,
> Of moving accidents by flood and field.'

Mrs. Cassilis effected a diversion by introducing her husband to Mr. Beck.

'Mr. Cassilis, sir,' he said, 'I have a letter for you from one of our most prominent bankers. And I called in the City this afternoon to give it to you. But I was unfortunate. Sir, I hope that we shall become better acquainted. And I am proud, sir, I am proud of making the acquaintance of a man who has the privilege of life partnership with Mrs. Cassilis. That is a great privilege, sir, and I hope you value it.'

'Hum—yes; thank you, Mr. Beck,' replied Mr.

Cassilis, in a tone which conveyed to the sharp-eared Phillis the idea that he thought considerable value ought to be attached to the fact of having a life partnership with *him*. 'And how do you like our country?'

The worst of going to America if you are an Englishman, or of crossing to England if you are an American, is that you can never escape that most searching and comprehensive question.

Said Mr. Gilead Beck:

'Well, sir, a dollar goes a long way in this country—especially in cigars and drinks.'

'In drinks!' Phillis listened. The other ladies shot glances at each other.

'Phillis, my dear'—Mrs. Cassilis crossed the room and interrupted her rapt attention—'let me introduce Mr. Ronald Dunquerque. Do you think you could play something?'

She bowed to the young hero with sparkling eyes and rose to comply with the invitation. He followed her to the piano. She played in that sweet spontaneous manner which the women who have only been *taught* hear with despair; she touched the keys as if she loved them and as if they understood her; she played one or two of the 'Songs without Words;' and then, starting a simple melody, she began to

sing, without being asked, a simple old ballad. Her tone was low at first, because she did not know the room, not because she was afraid; but it gradually rose as she felt her power, till the room was filled with the volumes of her rich contralto voice. Jack Dunquerque stood beside her. She looked up in his face with eyes that smiled a welcome while she went on singing.

'You told us you could not read,' said the young man when she finished.

'It is quite true, Mr. Dunquerque. I cannot.'

'How, then, can you play and sing?'

'O, I play by ear and by memory. That is nothing wonderful.'

'Won't you go on playing?'

She obeyed, talking in low and measured tones, in time with the air.

'I think you know my guardian, Mr. Lawrence Colquhoun. Will you tell me all about him? I have never seen him yet.'

This unprincipled young man saw his chance, and promptly seized the opportunity.

'I should like to very much, but one cannot talk here before all these people. If you will allow me to call to-morrow, I will gladly tell you all I know about him.'

'You had better come at luncheon-time,' she replied, 'and then I shall be very glad to see you.'

Mr. Abraham Dyson usually told his friends to come at luncheon-time, so she could not be wrong. Also she knew by this time that the Twins were always asleep at two o'clock, so that she would be alone; and it was pleasant to think of a talk, *sola cum solo*, with this interesting specimen of newly-discovered humanity—a young man who had actually saved another man's life.

'Is she an outrageous flirt?' thought Jack, 'or is she deliciously and wonderfully simple?'

On the way home he discussed the problem with Ladds.

'I don't care which it is,' he concluded, 'I must see her again. Ladds, old man, I believe I could fall in love with that girl. "Ask me no more, for at a touch I yield." Did you notice her, Tommy? Did you see her sweet eyes—I must say she has the sweetest eyes in all the world—looking with a pretty wonder at our quaint Yankee friend? Did you see her trying to take an interest in the twaddle of old Cassilis? Did you—'

'Have we eyes?' Ladds growled. 'Is the heart at five-and-thirty a log?'

'And her figure, tall and slender, lissom and

gracieuse. And her face, "the silent war of lilies and of roses." How I love the brunette faces! They are never insipid.'

'Do you remember the half-caste Spanish girl in Manilla?'

'Ladds, don't dare to mention that girl beside this adorable angel of purity. I have found out her Christian name—it is Phillis—rhymes to lilies; and I am going to call at her house to-morrow—Carnarvon-square.'

'And I am going to have half an hour in the smoking-room,' said Ladds as they arrived at the portals of the club.

'So am I,' said Jack. 'You know what Othello says of Desdemona:

> "O thou weed,
> Who art so lovely fair, and smell'st so sweet
> That the sense aches at thee!"

I mean Phillis Fleming, of course, not your confounded tobacco.'

CHAPTER VIII.

'They say if money goes before, all ways do lie open.'

'I CALL this kind, boys,' said Mr. Gilead P. Beck, welcoming his visitors, Captain Ladds and Jack Dunquerque; 'I call this friendly. I asked myself last night, "Will those boys come to see me, or will they let the ragged Yankee slide?" And here you are.'

'Change,' said Ladds the monosyllabic, looking round. 'Gold looking up?'

There is a certain suite of rooms in the Langham Hotel—there may be a hundred such suites known to the travellers who have explored that mighty hostelry—originally designed for foreign princes, ambassadors, or those wandering kings whom our hospitality sends to an inn. The suite occupied by Mr. Beck consisted of a large reception-room, a smaller apartment occupied by himself, and a bedroom. The rooms were furnished in supposed accordance with the tastes of their princely occupants, that is to say, with solid magnificence. Mr.

Beck had been in England no more than a week, and as he had not yet begun to buy anything, the rooms were without those splendid decorations of pictures, plate, and objects of art generally with which he subsequently adorned them. They looked heavy and rather cheerless. A fire was burning on the hearth, and Mr. Beck was standing before it with an unlighted cigar in his lips. Apparently he had already presented some letters of introduction, for there were a few cards of invitation on the mantelshelf. He was dressed in a black frock-coat, as a gentleman should be, and he wore it buttoned up, so that his tall stature and thin figure were shown off to full advantage. He wore a plain black ribbon by way of necktie, and was modest in the way of studs. Jack Dunquerque noticed that he wore no jewelry of any kind, which he thought unusual in a man of unlimited credit, a new man whose fortune was not two years old. He was an unmistakable American. His chin was now close shaven, and without the traditional tuft; but he had the bright restless eye, the long spare form, the obstinately straight hair, the thin flexible mouth with mobile lips, the delicately-shaped chin, and the long neck, which seem points characteristic with our Transatlantic brethren. His grave face lit up with a smile of pleasure when he

saw Jack Dunquerque. It was a thoughtful face; it had lines in it, such as might have been caused by the buffets of Fate; but his eyes were kindly. As for his speech, it preserved the nasal drawl of his New England birthplace; he spoke slowly, as if feeling for the right words, and his pronunciation was that of a man sprung from the ranks. Let us say at once that we do not attempt to reproduce by an affected spelling, save occasionally, the Doric of the New England speech. He was a typical man of the Eastern States—self-reliant, courageous, independent, somewhat prejudiced, roughly educated, ready for any employment and ashamed of none, and withal brave as an Elizabethan buccaneer, sensitive as a Victorian lady, sympathetic as—as Henry Longfellow.

'There is change, sir'—he addressed himself to Ladds—'in most things human. The high tides and the low tides keep us fresh. Else we should be as stagnant as a Connecticut gospel-grinder in his village location.'

'This is high tide, I see,' said Jack, laughing. 'I hope that American high tides last longer than ours.'

'I am hopeful, Mr. Dunquerque, that they air of a more abiding disposition. If you should be

curious, gentlemen, to know my history since I left you in San Francisco, I will tell it from the beginning. You remember that blessed insect, the Golden Butterfly?'

'In the little box,' said Ladds. 'I asked you after his welfare last night.'

Jack began to blush.

'Before you begin,' he interposed, 'we ought to tell you that since we came home we have written a book, we two, about our travels.'

'Is that so?' asked Mr. Beck, with some natural reverence for the author of a book.

'And we have put you into it, with an account of Empire City.'

'Me—as I was—in rags and without even a gun?'

'Yes; not a flattering likeness, but a true one.'

'And the lucky shot, is that there too?'

'Some of it is there,' said Ladds. 'Jack would not have the whole story published. Looked ostentatious.'

'Gentlemen, I shall buy that book. I shall take five hundred copies of that book for my people in the Dominion. Just as I was, you say—no boots but moccasins; not a dollar nor a cent; running for

bare life before a Grisly. Gentlemen, that book will raise me in the estimation of my fellow-countrymen. And if you will allow me the privilege, I shall say it was written by two friends of mine.'

Jack breathed freely. He was afraid Mr. Beck might have resented the intrusion of his ragged personality. An Englishman certainly would. Mr. Beck seemed to think that the contrast between present broadcloth and past rags reflected the highest credit on himself.

This part of the work indeed, which the critics declared to be wildly improbable, was the only portion read by Mr. Beck. And just as he persisted in giving Jack the sole credit of his rescue—perhaps because in his mental confusion he never even heard the second shot which finished the bear — so he steadfastly regarded Jack as the sole author of this stirring chapter, which was Ladds' masterpiece, and was grateful accordingly.

'And now,' he went on, 'I must show you the critter himself, the Golden Bug.'

There was standing in a corner, where it would be least likely to receive any rude shocks or collisions, a small heavy iron safe. This he unlocked, and brought forth with great care a glass case which exactly fitted the safe. The frame of the case was

made of golden rods; along the lower part of the front pane, in letters of gold, was the legend:

'If this Golden Butterfly fall and break,
Farewell the Luck of Gilead P. Beck.'

'Your poetry, Mr. Dunquerque,' said Mr. Beck, pointing to the distich with pride. 'Your own composition, sir, and my motto.'

Within the case was the Butterfly itself, but glorified. The bottom of the glass box was a thick sheet of pure gold, on which was fixed a rose, the leaves, flower, and stalk worked in dull gold. Not a fine work of art perhaps, but a reasonably good rose, as good as that Papal rose they show in the Cluny Hotel. The Butterfly was poised upon the rose by means of thin gold wire, which passed round the strip of quartz which formed the body. The ends were firmly welded into the leaves of the flower, and when the case was moved the insect vibrated as if he was in reality alive.

'There! Look at it, gentlemen. That is the inseck which has made the fortune of Gilead P. Beck.'

He addressed himself to both, but his eye rested on Jack with a look which showed that he regarded the young man with something more than friendli-

ness. The man who fired that shot, the young fellow who saved him from a cruel death, was his David, the beloved of his soul.

Ladds looked at it curiously, as if expecting some manifestation of the supernatural.

'Is it a medium?' he asked. 'Does it rap, or answer questions, or tell the card you are thinking of? Shall you exhibit the thing in the Egyptian Hall as a freak of Nature?'

'No, sir, I shall not. But I will tell you what I did, if you will let me replace him in his box, where he sits and works for Me. No harm will come to him there, unless an airthquake happens. Sit down, general, and you too, Mr. Dunquerque. Here is a box of cigars, which ought to be good, and you will call for your own drink.'

It was but twelve o'clock, and therefore early for revivers of any sort. Finally, Mr. Beck ordered champagne.

'That drink,' he said, 'as you get it here, is a compound calculated to inspirit Job in the thick of his misfortunes. But if there is any other single thing you prefer, and it is to be had in this almighty city, name that thing and you shall have it.'

Then he began:

'I went off, after I left you, by the Pacific Rail-

way—not the first time I travelled up and down that line—and I landed in New York. Mr. Colquhoun gave me a rig out, and you, sir'—he nodded to Jack —'you, sir, gave me the stamps to pay the ticket.'

Jack, accused of this act of benevolence, naturally blushed a guilty acknowledgment.

Mr. Gilead P. Beck made no reference to the gift either then or at any subsequent period. Nor did he ever offer to repay it, even when he discovered the slenderness of Jack's resources. That showed that he was a sensitive and sympathetic man. To offer a small sum of money in repayment of a free gift from an extraordinarily rich man to a very poor one is not a delicate thing to do. Therefore this gentleman of the backwoods abstained from doing it.

'New York City,' he continued, 'is not the village I should recommend to a man without dollars in his pocket. London, where there is an institootion, or a charity, or a hospital, or a workhouse, or a hot-soup boiler in every street, is the city for that gentleman. Fiji, p'r'aps, for one who has a yearning after bananas and black civilisation. But not New York. No, gentlemen; if you go to New York, let it be when you've made your pile, and not before. Then you will find out that there air thirty theatres in the city, with lovely and accomplished actresses in each, and

you can walk into Delmonico's as if the place belonged to you. But for men down on their luck, New York is a cruel place.

'I left that city, and I made my way North. I wanted to see the old folks I left behind long ago in Lexington; I found them dead, and I was sorry. Then I went farther North. P'r'aps I was driven by the yellow toy hanging at my back. Anyhow it was only six weeks after I left you that I found myself in the city of Limerick on Lake Ontario.

'You do not know the city of Limerick, I daresay. It was not famous, nor was it pretty. In fact, gentlemen, it was the durndest misbegotten location built around a swamp that ever called itself a city. There were a few delooded farmers trying to persuade themselves that things would look up; there were a few down-hearted settlers wondering why they ever came there, and how they would get out again; and there were a few log-houses in a row which called themselves a street.

'I got there, and I stayed there. Their carpenter was dead, and I am a handy man; so I took his place. Then I made a few dollars doing chores around.'

'What are chores?'

'All sorts. The clocks were out of repair; the

handles were coming off the pails; the chairs were without legs; the pump-handle crank; the very bell-rope in the meetin'-house was broken. You never saw such a helpless lot. I did not stay among them because I loved them, but because I saw things.'

'Ghosts?' asked Ladds, still with an eye to the supernatural.

'No, sir. That was what they thought I saw when I went prowling around by myself of an evening. They thought too that I was mad when I began to buy the land. You could buy it for nothing; a dollar an acre: half a dollar an acre; anything an acre. I've mended a cart-wheel for a five-acre lot of swamp. They laughed at me. The children used to cry out when I passed along, "There goes mad Beck." But I bought all I could, and my only regret was that I couldn't buy up the hull township —clear off men, women, and children, and start fresh. Some more champagne, Mr. Dunquerque.'

'What was the Golden Butterfly doing all this time?' asked Ladds.

'That faithful inseck, sir, was hanging around my neck, as when you were first introduced to him. He was whisperin' and eggin' me on, because he was bound to fulfil the old squaw's prophecy. Without

my knowing it, sir, that prodigy of the world, who is as alive as you air at this moment, will go on whisperin' till such time as the rope's played out and the smash comes. Then he'll be silent again.'

He spoke with a solemn earnestness which impressed his hearers. They looked at the fire-proof safe with a feeling that at any moment the metallic insect might open the door, fly forth, and, after hovering round the room, light at Mr. Beck's ear, and begin to whisper words of counsel. Did not Mohammed have a pigeon? and did not Louis Napoleon at Boulogne have an eagle? Why should not Mr. Beck have a butterfly?

'The citizens of Limerick, gentlemen, in that dismal part of Canada where they bewail their miserable lives, air not a people who have eyes to see, ears to hear, or brains to understand. I saw that they were walking—no, sleeping—over fields of incalculable wealth, and they never suspected. They smoked their pipes and ate their pork. But they never saw and they never suspected. Between whiles they praised the Lord for sending them a fool like me, something to talk about and somebody to laugh at. They wanted to know what was in the little box; they sent children to peep in at my window of an evening and report what I was doing. They reported

that I was always doing the same thing; always with a map of Limerick City and its picturesque and interestin' suburbs, staking out the ground and reckoning up my acres. That's what I did at night. And in the morning I looked about me and wondered where I should begin.'

'What did you see when you looked about?'

'I saw, sir, a barren bog. If it had been a land as fertile as the land of Canaan, that would not have made my heart to bound as it did bound when I looked across that swamp; for I never was a tiller or a lover of the soil. A barren bog it was. The barrenest boggiest part of it all was my claim; when the natives spoke of it they called it Beck's Farm, and then the poor critturs squirmed in their chairs and laughed. Yes, they laughed. Beck's Farm, they said. It was the only thing they had to laugh about. Wal, up and down the face of that almighty bog there ran creeks, and after rainy weather the water stood about on the morasses. Plenty of water, but, a curious thing, none of it fit to drink. No living thing except man would set his lips to that brackish bad-smelling water. And that wasn't all; sometimes a thick black slime rose to the surface of the marsh and lay there an inch thick; sometimes you came upon patches of "gum-beds," as they

called them, where the ground was like tar, and smelt strong. That is what I saw when I looked around, sir. And to think that those poor mean pork-raisers saw it all the same as I did and never suspected! Only cursed the gifts of the Lord when they weren't laughing at Beck's Farm.'

'And you found—what? Gold?'

'No. I found what I expected. And that was better than gold. Mind, I say nothing against gold. Gold has made many a pretty little fortune—'

'Little!'

'Little, sir. There's no big fortunes made out of gold. Though many a pretty villa-location, with a tidy flower-garden, up and down the States, is built out of the gold-mines. Dimonds again. One or two men likes the name of dimonds; but not many. There's the disadvantage about gold and dimonds that you have to dig for them, and to dig durned hard, and to dig by yourself mostly. Americans do not love digging. Like the young gentleman in the parable, they cannot dig, and to beg they air ashamed. It is the only occupation that they air ashamed of. Then there's iron, and there's coals; but you've got to dig for them. Lord! Lord! This great airth holds a hundred things covered up for them who know how to look and do not mind digging. But,

gentlemen, the greatest gift the airth has to bestow she gave to me—abundant, spontaneous, etarnal, without bottom, and free.'

'And that is—'

'It is ILE.'

Mr. Beck paused a moment. His face was lit with a real and genuine enthusiasm, a pious appreciation of the choicer blessings of life; those, namely, which enable a man to sit down and enjoy the proceeds of other men's labour. No provision has been made in the prayer-book of any Church for the expression of this kind of thankfulness. Yet surely there ought to be somewhere a clause for the rich. No more blissful repose can fall upon the soul than, after long years of labour and failure, to sit down and enjoy the fruits of other men's labour. A Form of Thanksgiving for publishers, managers of theatres, owners of coal-mines, and such gentlemen as Mr. Gilead P. Beck, might surely be introduced into our Ritual with advantage. It would naturally be accompanied by incense.

'It is Ile, sir.'

He opened another bottle of champagne and took a glass.

'Ile. Gold you have to dig, to pick, to wash. Gold means rheumatism and a bent back. Ile flows,

and you become suddenly rich. You make all the loafers around fill your pails for you. And then your bankers tell you how many millions of dollars you are worth.'

'Millions!' repeated Jack. 'The word sounds very rich and luxurious.'

'It is so, sir. There's nothing like it in the Old Country. England is a beautiful place, and London is a beautiful city. You've got many blessin's in this beautiful city. If you haven't got Joe Tweed, you've got—'

'Hush!' said Jack; 'it's libellous to give names.'

'And if you haven't got Erie stock and your whisky-rings, you've got your foreign bonds to take your surplus cash. No, gentlemen; London is not, in some respects, much behind New York. But one thing this country has not got, and that is—Ile.

'It is nearly a year since I made up my mind to begin my well. I *knew* it was there, because I'd been in Pennsylvania and learned the signs; it was only the question whether I should strike it, and where. The neighbours thought I was digging for water, and figured around with their superior intellecks, because they were certain the water would be brackish. Then they got tired of watching, and I worked on. Boring a well is not quite the sort

of work a man would select for a pleasant and variegated occupation. I reckon it's monotonous; but I worked on. I knew what was coming; I thought o' that Indian squaw, and I always had my Golden Butterfly tied in a box at my back. I bored and I bored. Day after day I bored. In that lonely miasmatic bog I bored all day and best part of the night. For nothing came, and sometimes qualms crossed my mind that perhaps there would never be anything. But always there was the gummy mud, smelling of what I knew was below, to lead me on.

'It was the ninth day, and noon. I had a shanty called the farmhouse, about a hundred yards from my well. And there I was taking my dinner. To you two young English aristocrats—'

'Ladds' Cocoa, the only perfect fragrance.'

'Shut up, Ladds,' growled Jack; 'don't interrupt.'

'I say, to you two young aristocrats a farmer's dinner in that township would not sound luxurious. Mine consisted, on that day and all days, of cold boiled pork and bread.'

'Ah, yah!' said Jack Dunquerque, who had a proud stomach.

'Yes, sir, my own remark every day when I sat down to that simple banquet. But when you are

hungry you must eat, murmur though you will for Egyptian flesh-pots. Cold pork was my dinner, with bread. And the water to wash it down with was brackish. In those days, gentlemen, I said no grace. It didn't seem to me that the most straight-walking Christian was expected to be more than tolerably thankful for cold pork. My gratitude was so moderate that it wasn't worth offering.'

'And while you were eating the pork,' said Ladds, 'the Golden Butterfly flew down the shaft by himself, and struck oil of his own accord.'

'No, sir; for once you are wrong. That most beautiful creation of Nature in her sweetest mood—she must have got up with the sun on a fine summer morning—was reposing in his box round my neck as usual. He did not go down the shaft at all. Nobody went down. But something came up—up like a fountain, up like the bubbling over of the airth's eternal teapot; a black muddy jet of stuff. Great sun! I think I see it now.'

He paused and sighed.

'It was nearly all Ile, pure and unadulterated, from the world's workshop. Would you believe it, gentlemen? There were not enough bar'ls, not by hundreds, in the neighbourhood all round Limerick City, to catch that Ile. It flowed in a stream three

feet deep down the creek; it was carried away into the lake and lost; it ran free and uninterrupted for three days and three nights. We saved what we could. The neighbours brought their pails, their buckets, their basins, their kettles; there was not a utensil of any kind that was not filled with Ile, from the pigs' troughs to the child's pap-bowl. Not one. It ran and it ran. When the first flow subsided we calculated that seven millions of bar'ls had been wasted and lost. Seven millions! I am a Christian man, and grateful to the Butterfly, but I sometimes repine when I think of that wasted Ile. Every bar'l worth nine dollars at least, and most likely ten. Sixty-three millions of dollars. Twelve millions of pounds sterling lost in three days for want of a few coopers. Did you ever think, Mr. Dunquerque, what you could do with twelve millions sterling?'

'I never did,' said Jack. 'My imagination never got beyond thousands.'

'With twelve millions I might have bought up the daily press of England, and made you all republicans in a month. I might have made the Panama Canal; I might have bought Palesteen and sent the Jews back; I might have given America fifty ironclads; I might have put Don Carlos on the throne of Spain. But it warn't to be. Providence wants

no rivals, meddling and messing. That was why the Ile ran away and was lost while I ate the cold boiled pork. Perhaps it's an interestin' fact that I never liked cold boiled pork before, and I have hated it ever since.

'The great spurt subsided, and we went to work in earnest. That well has continued to yield five hundred bar'ls daily. That is four thousand five hundred dollars in my pocket every four-and-twenty hours.'

'Do you mean that your income is nine hundred pounds a day?' asked Jack.

'I do, sir. You go your pile on that. It is more, but I do not know how much more. Perhaps it's twice as much. There are wells of mine sunk all over the place; the swamp is covered with Gilead P. Beck's derricks. The township of Limerick has become the city of Rockoleaville—my name, that was—and a virtuous and industrious population are all engaged morning, noon, and night in fillin' my pails. There's twenty-five bars, I believe, at this moment. There air three meetin'-houses and two daily papers; and there air fifteen lawyers.'

'It seems better than Cocoa Nibs,' said Ladds.

'But the oil may run dry.'

'It *has* run dry in Pennsylvania. That is so,

and I do not deny it. But Ile will not run dry in Rockoleaville. I have been thinking over the geological problem and I have solved it, all by myself. What is this world, gentlemen?'

'A round ball,' said Jack, with the promptitude of a Board schoolboy and the profundity of a Woolwich cadet.

'Sir, it is like a great orange. It has its outer rind, what they call the crust. Get through that crust and what do you find?'

'More crust,' replied Ladds, who was not a competition-wallah.

'Did you ever eat pumpkin-pie, sir?' Mr. Beck replied, *more Socratico*, by asking another question. 'And if you did, was your pie all crust? Inside that pie, sir, was pumpkin, apple, and juice. So inside the rind of the earth there may be all sorts of things: gold and iron, lava, dimonds, coals; but the juice, the pie-juice, is Ile. You tap the rind and you get the Ile. This Ile will run, I calculate, for five thousand and fifty-two years, if they don't sinfully waste it, at an annual consumption of eighteen million bar'ls. Now that's a low estimate when you consider the progress of civilisation. When it is all gone, perhaps before, this poor old airth will crack up like an empty egg.'

This was an entirely new view of geology, and it required time for Mr. Beck's hearers to grasp the truth thus presented to their minds. They were silent.

'At Rockoleaville,' he went on, 'I've got the pipe straight into the middle of the pie, and right through the crust. There's no mistake about that main shaft. Other mines may give out, but my Ile will run for ever.'

'Then we may congratulate you,' said Jack, 'on the possession of a boundless fortune.'

'You may, sir.'

'And what do you intend to do?'

'For the present I shall stay in London. I like your great city. Here I get invited to dinner and dancin', because I am an American and rich. There they won't have a man who is not thoroughbred. Your friend Mrs. Cassilis asks me to her house—a first-rater. A New York lady turns up her pretty nose at a man who's struck Ile. "Shoddy," she says, and then she takes no more notice. Shoddy it may be. Rough my manners may be. But I don't pretend to anything, and the stamps air real.'

'We always thought ourselves exclusive,' said Jack.

'Did you, sir? Wal—' He stopped, as if he

had intended to say something unpleasantly true. 'I shall live in London for the present. I've got a big income, and I don't rightly know what to do with it. But I shall find out some time.

'That was a lovely young thing with Mrs. Cassilis the other night,' he went on meditatively. 'A young thing that a man can worship for her beauty while she is young, and her goodness all her life. Not like an American gal. Ours are prettier, but they look as if they would blow away. And their voices are not so full. Miss Fleming is flesh and blood. Don't blush, Mr. Dunquerque, because it does you credit.'

Jack did blush, and they took their departure.

'Mr. Dunquerque,' whispered Gilead P. Beck when Ladds was through the door, 'think of what I told you; what is mine is yours. Remember that. If I can do anything for you, let me know. And come to see me. It does me good to look at your face. Come here as often as you can.'

Jack laughed and escaped.

CHAPTER IX.

'By my modesty,
The jewel in my dower, I would not wish
Any companion in the world but you.'

Jack Dunquerque was no more remarkable for shrinking modesty than any other British youth of his era; but he felt some little qualms as he walked towards Bloomsbury the day after Mrs. Cassilis's dinner to avail himself of Phillis's invitation.

Was it coquetry or was it simplicity?

She said she would be glad to see him at luncheon. Who else would be there?

Probably a Mrs. Jagenal—doubtless the wife of the heavy man who brought Miss Fleming to the party; herself a solid person in black silk and a big gold chain; motherly with the illiterate Dryad.

'Houses mighty respectable,' he thought, penetrating into Carnarvon-square. 'Large incomes; comfortable quarters; admirable port, most likely, in most of them; claret certainly good too—none of your Gladstone tap; sherry probably rather coarse. Must ask for Mrs. Jagenal, I suppose.'

He did ask for Mrs. Jagenal, and was informed by Jane that there was no such person, and that, as she presently explained with warmth, no such person was desired by the household. Jack Dunquerque thereupon asked for Mr. Jagenal. The maid asked which Mr. Jagenal. Jack replied in the most irritating manner possible—the Socratic—by asking another question. The fact that Socrates went about perpetually asking questions is quite enough to account for the joy with which an exasperated mob witnessed his judicial murder. The Athenians bore for a good many years with his maddening questions—as to whether they meant this way or that way or how—and finally lost patience. Hence the little bowl of drink.

Quoth Jack, 'How many are there of them?'

Jane looked at the caller with suspicion. He seemed a gentleman, but appearances are deceptive. Suppose he came for what he could pick up. The Twins' umbrellas were in the hall, and their great-coats. He laughed, and showed an honest front; but who can trust a London stranger? Jane remembered the silver spoons now on the luncheon-table, and began to think of shutting the door in his face.

'You can't be a friend of the family,' she said, 'else you'd know the three Mr. Jagenals by name,

and not come here showing your ignorance by asking for Mrs. Jagenal. Mrs. Jagenal indeed! Perhaps you'd better call in the evening and see Mr. Joseph.'

'I am not a friend of the family,' he replied meekly. 'I wish I was. But Miss Fleming expects me at this hour. Will you take in my card?'

He stepped into the hall, and felt as if the fortress was won. Phillis was waiting for him in the dining-room, where, he observed, luncheon was laid for two. Was he, then, about to be entertained by the young lady alone?

If she looked dainty in her white evening dress, she was far daintier in her half-mourning gray frock, which fitted so tightly to her slender figure, and was set off by the narrow black ribbon round her neck, which was her only ornament; for she carried neither watch nor chain, and wore neither earrings nor finger-rings. This heiress was as innocent of jewelry as any little milliner girl of Bond-street, and far more happy, because she did not wish to wear any.

'I thought you would come about this time,' she said, with the kindliest welcome in her eyes; 'and I waited for you here. Let us sit down and take luncheon.'

Mr. Abraham Dyson never had any visitors ex-

cept for dinner or luncheon; so that Phillis naturally associated an early call with eating.

'I always have luncheon by myself,' explained the young hostess; 'so that it is delightful to have some one who can talk.'

She sat at the head of the table, Jack taking his seat at the side. She looked fresh, bright, and animated. The sight of her beauty even affected Jack's appetite, although it was an excellent luncheon.

'This is curried fowl,' she went on. 'It was made for Mr. Jagenal's brothers; but they came down late, and were rather cross. We could not persuade them to eat anything this morning.'

'Are they home for the holidays?'

Phillis burst out laughing—such a fresh, bright, spontaneous laugh. Jack laughed too, and then wondered why he did it.

'Home for the holidays! They are always home, and it is always a holiday with them.'

'Do you not allow them to lunch with you?'

She laughed again.

'They do not breakfast till ten or eleven.'

Jack felt a little fogged, and waited for further information.

'Will you take beer or claret? No, thank you; no curry for me. Jane, Mr. Dunquerque will take a

glass of beer. How beautiful!' she went on, looking steadily in the young man's face, to his confusion—'how beautiful it must be to meet a man whose life you have saved! I should like—once—just once—to do a single great action, and dream of it ever after.'

'But mine was not a great action. I shot a bear which was following Mr. Beck and meant mischief; that is all.'

'But you might have missed,' said Phillis, with justice. 'And then Mr. Beck would have been killed.'

Might have missed! How many V.C.'s we should have but for that simple possibility! Might have missed! And then Gilead Beck would have been clawed, and the Golden Butterfly destroyed, and this history never have reached beyond its first chapter. Above all, Phillis might never have known Jack Dunquerque.

'And you are always alone in this great house?' he asked, to change the subject.

'Only in the day-time. Mr. Joseph and I breakfast at eight. Then I walk with him as far as his office in Lincoln's-inn-fields, now that I know the way. At first he used to send one of his clerks back with me, for fear of my being lost. But I felt sorry for

the poor young man having to walk all the way with a girl like me, and so I told him, after the second day, that I was sure he longed to be at his writing, and I would go home by myself.'

'No doubt,' said Jack, 'he was rejoiced to go back to his pleasant and exciting work. All lawyers' clerks are so well paid, and so happy in their occupation, that they prefer it even to walking with a—a —a Dryad.'

Phillis was dimly conscious that there was more in these words than a literal statement. She was as yet unacquainted with the figures of speech which consist of saying one thing and meaning another, and she made a mental note of the fact that lawyers' clerks are a happy and contented race. It adds something to one's happiness to know that others are also happy.

'And the boys—Mr. Jagenal's brothers?'

'They are always asleep from two to six. Then they come down to dinner, and talk of the work they have done. Don't you know them? O, they are not boys at all! One is Cornelius. He is a great poet. He is writing a long epic poem called the *Upheaving of Ælfred*. Humphrey, his brother, says it will be the greatest work of this century. But I do not think very much is done. Humphrey is a

great artist, you know. He is engaged on a splendid picture — at least it will be splendid when it is finished. At present nothing is on the canvas. He says he is studying the groups. Cornelius says it will be the finest artistic achievement of the age. Will you have some more beer? Jane, give Mr. Dunquerque a glass of sherry. And now let us go into the drawing-room, and you shall tell me all about my guardian, Lawrence Colquhoun.'

In the hall a thought struck the girl.

'Come with me,' she said; 'I will introduce you to the Poet and the Painter. You shall see them at work.'

Her eyes danced with delight as she ran up the stairs, turning to see if her guest followed. She stopped at a door, the handle of which she turned with great care. Jack mounted the stairs after her.

It was a large and well-furnished room. Rows of books stood in order on the shelves. A bright fire burned on the hearth. A portfolio was on the table, with a clean inkstand and an unsullied blotting-pad. By the fire sat, in a deep and very comfortable easy-chair, the Poet, sound asleep.

'There!' she whispered. 'In the portfolio is the great poem. Look at it.'

'We ought not to look at manuscripts, ought we?'

'Not if there is anything written. But there isn't. Of course I may always turn over any pages, because I cannot read.'

She turned them over. Nothing but blank sheets, white in virgin purity.

Cornelius sat with his head a little forward, breathing rather noisily.

'Isn't it hard work?' laughed the girl. 'Poor fellow, isn't it exhaustive work? Let me introduce you. Mr. Cornelius Jagenal, Mr. Ronald Dunquerque.' Jack bowed to the sleeping bard. 'Now you know each other. That is what Mr. Dyson used always to say. Hush! we might wake him up and interrupt—the Work. Come away, and I will show you the Artist.'

Another room, equally well furnished, but in a different manner. There were 'properties:' drinking-glasses of a deep ruby red, luminous and splendid, standing on the shelves; flasks of a dull rich green; a model in armour; a lay figure, with a shawl thrown over the head and looped up under the arm; a few swords hanging upon the walls; curtains that caught the light and spread it over the room in softened colouring; and by the fire a couch, on which

lay, sleeping, Humphrey with the wealth of silky beard.

There was an easel, and on it a canvas. This was as blank as Cornelius's sheets of paper.

'Permit me again,' said the girl. 'Mr. Humphrey Jagenal, Mr. Ronald Dunquerque. Now you know each other.'

Jack bowed low to the genius.

Phillis, her eyes afloat with fun, beckoned the young man to the table. Pencil and paper lay there. She sat down and drew the sleeping painter in a dozen swift strokes. Then she looked up, laughing:

'Is that like him?'

Jack could hardly repress a cry of admiration.

'I am glad you think it good. Please write underneath, "The Artist at work." Thank you. Is that it? We will now pin it on the canvas. Think what he will say when he wakes up and sees it.'

They stole out again as softly as a pair of burglars.

'Now you have seen the Twins. They are really very nice, but they drink too much wine, and sit up late. In the morning they are sometimes troublesome, when they won't take their breakfast; but in the evening, after dinner, they are quite tractable. And you see how they spend their day.'

'Do they never do any work at all?'

'I will tell you what I think,' she replied gravely. 'Mr. Dyson used to tell me of men who are so vain that they are ashamed to give the world anything but what they know to be the best. And the best only comes by successive effort. So they wait and wait, till the time goes by and they cannot even produce second-rate work. I think the Twins belong to that class of people.'

By this time they were in the drawing-room.

'And now,' said Phillis, 'you are going to tell me all about my guardian.'

'Tell me something more about yourself first,' said Jack, not caring to bring Mr. Lawrence Colquhoun into the conversation just yet. 'You said last night that you would show me your drawings.'

'They are only pencil and pen-and-ink sketches.' Phillis put a small portfolio on the table and opened it. 'This morning Mr. Joseph took me to see an exhibition of paintings. Most of the artists in that exhibition cannot draw, but some can—and then—O!'

'They cannot draw better than you, Miss Fleming, I am quite sure.'

She shook her head as Jack spoke, turning over the sketches.

'It seems so strange to be called Miss Fleming. Everybody used to call me Phillis.'

'Was—was everybody young?' Jack asked, with an impertinence beyond his years.

'No; everybody was old. I suppose young people always call each other by their Christian names. Yours seems to me rather stiff. Ronald, Ronald—I am afraid I do not like it very much.'

'My brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, cousins and kinsfolk—the people who pay my debts and therefore love me most—call me Ronald. But everybody else calls me Jack.'

'Jack!' she murmured. 'What a pretty name Jack is! May I call you Jack?'

'If you only would!' he cried, with a quick flushing of his cheek. 'If you only would! Not when other people are present, but all to ourselves, when we are together like this. That is, if you do not mind.'

Could the Serpent when he cajoled Eve have begun in a more subtle and artful manner? One is ashamed for Jack Dunquerque.

'I shall always call you Jack, then, unless when people like Mrs. Cassilis are present.'

'And what am I to call you?'

'My name is Phillis, you know.' But she knew,

because her French maid had told her, that some girls have names of endearment, and she hesitated a little, in hope that Jack would find one for her.

He did. She looked him so frankly and freely in the face that he took courage, and said with a bold heart:

'Phillis is a very sweet name. You know the song, "Phillis is my only joy"? I ought to call you Miranda, the Princess of the Enchanted Island. But it would be prettier to call you Phil.'

'Phil!' Her lips parted in a smile of themselves as she shaped the name. It is a name which admits of expression. You may lengthen it out if you like; you may shorten it if you like. 'Phil! That is very pretty. No one ever called me Phil before.'

'And we will be great friends, shall we not?'

'Yes, great friends. I have never had a friend at all.'

'Let us shake hands over our promise. Phil, say, "Jack Dunquerque, I will try to like you, and I will be your friend."'

'Jack Dunquerque,' she placed her hands, both of them, in his, and began to repeat, looking in his face quite earnestly and solemnly, 'I will try—that is nonsense, because I *do* like you very much al-

ready; and I will always be your friend, if you will be mine and will let me.'

Then he, with a voice that shook a little, because he knew that this was very irregular and even wrong, but that the girl was altogether lovable, and a maiden to be desired, and a queen among girls, and too beautiful to be resisted, said his say:

'Phil, I think you are the most charming girl I have ever seen in all my life. Let me be your friend always, Phil. Let me'—here he stopped, with a guilty tremor in his voice—'I hope—I hope—that you will always go on liking me more and more.'

He held both her pretty shapely hands in his own. She was standing a little back with her face turned up to his, and a bright fearless smile upon her lips and in her eyes. O, the eyes that smile before the lips!

'Some people seal a bargain,' he went on, hesitating and stammering, 'after the manner of the —the—early Christians—with a kiss. Shall we, Phil?'

Before she caught the meaning of his words he stooped and drew her gently towards him. Then suddenly he released her. For all in a moment the woman within her, unknown till that instant, was roused into life, and she shrank back—without the kiss.

Jack hung his head in silence. Phil, in silence too, stood opposite him, her eyes upon the ground.

She looked up stealthily and trembled.

Jack Dunquerque was troubled as he met her look.

'Forgive me, Phil,' he said humbly. 'It was wrong—I ought not. Only forgive me, and tell me we shall be friends all the same.'

'Yes,' she replied, not quite knowing what she said; 'I forgive you. But, Jack, please don't do it again.'

Then he returned to the drawings, sitting at the table, while she stood over him and told him what they were.

There was no diffidence or mock-modesty at all about her. The drawings were her life, and represented her inmost thoughts. She had never shown them all together to a single person, and now she was laying them all open before the young man whom yesterday she had met for the first time.

It seemed to him as if she were baring her very soul for him to read.

'I like to do them,' she said, 'because then I can recall everything that I have done or seen. Look! Here is the dear old house at Highgate, where I stayed for thirteen years without once going beyond

its walls. Ah, how long ago it seems, and yet it is only a week since I came away! And everything is so different to me now.'

'You were happy there, Phil?'

'Yes; but not so happy as I am now. I did not know you then, Jack.'

He beat down the temptation to take her in his arms and kiss her a thousand times. He tried to sit calmly critical over the drawings. But his hand shook.

'Tell me about it all,' he said softly.

'These are the sketches of my Highgate life. Stay; this one does not belong to this set. It is a likeness of you, which I drew last night when I came home.'

'Did you really draw one of me? Let me have it. Do let me have it.'

'It was meant for your face. But I could do a better one now. See, this is Mr. Beck, the American gentleman; and this is Captain Ladds. This is Mr. Cassilis.'

They were the roughest unfinished things, but she had seized the likeness in every one.

Jack kept his own portrait in his hand.

'Let me keep it.'

'Please, no; I want that one for myself.'

Once more, and for the last time in his life, a little distrust crossed Jack Dunquerque's mind. Could this girl, after all, be only the most accomplished of all coquettes? He looked up at her face as she stood beside him, and then abused himself for treachery to love.

'It is like me,' he said, looking at the pencil portrait; 'but you have made me too handsome.'

She shook her head.

'You *are* very handsome, I think,' she said gravely.

He was not, strictly speaking, handsome at all. He was rather an ugly youth, having no regularity of features. And it was a difficult face to draw, because he wore no beard—nothing but a light moustache to help it out.

'Phil, if you begin to flatter me you will spoil me; and I shall not be half so good a friend when I am spoiled. Won't you give this to me?'

'No; I keep my portfolio all to myself. But I will draw a better one, if you like, of you, and finish it up properly, like this.'

She showed him a pencil-drawing of a face which Rembrandt himself would have loved to paint. It was the face of an old man, wrinkled and crows-footed.

'That is my guardian, Mr. Dyson. I will draw

you in the same style. Poor dear guardian! I think he was very fond of me.'

Another thought struck the young man.

'Phil, will you instead make me a drawing—of your own face?'

'But can you not do it for yourself?'

'I? Phil, I could not even draw a haystack.'

'What a misfortune! It seems worse than not being able to read.'

'Draw me a picture of yourself, Phil.'

She considered.

'Nobody ever asked me to do that yet. And I never drew my own face. It would be nice, too, to think that you had a likeness of me, particularly as you cannot draw yourself. Jack, would you mind if it were not much like me?'

'I should prefer it like you. Please try. Give me yourself as you are now. Do not be afraid of making it too pretty.'

'I will try to make it like. Here is Mrs. Cassilis. She did not think it was very good.'

'Phil, you are a genius. Do you know that? I hold you to your promise. You will draw a portrait of yourself, and I will frame it and hang it up—no, I won't do that; I will keep it myself, and look at it when no one is with me.'

'That seems very pleasant,' said Phil, reflecting. 'I should like to think that you are looking at me sometimes. Jack, I only met you yesterday, and we are old friends already.'

'Yes; quite old familiar friends, are we not? Now tell me all about yourself.'

She obeyed. It was remarkable how readily she obeyed the orders of this new friend, and told him all about her life with Mr. Dyson—the garden and paddock, out of which she never went, even to church; the pony, the quiet house, and the quiet life with the old man who taught her by talking; her drawing and her music; and her simple wonder what life was like outside the gates.

'Did you never go to church, Phil?'

'No; we had prayers at home; and on Sunday evenings I sang hymns.'

Clearly her religious education had been grossly neglected. 'Never heard of a Ritualist,' thought Jack, with a feeling of gladness. 'Doesn't know anything about vestments; isn't learned in school-feasts; and never attended a tea-meeting. This girl is a Phœnix.' Why—why was he a Younger Son?

'And is Mr. Cassilis a relation of yours?'

'No; Mr. Cassilis is Mr. Dyson's nephew. All

Mr. Dyson's fortune is left to found an institution for educating girls as I was educated—'

'Without reading or writing?'

'I suppose so. Only, you see, it is most unfortunate that my own education is incomplete, and they cannot carry out the testator's wishes, Mr. Jagenal tells me, because they have not been able to find the concluding chapters of his book. Mr. Dyson wrote a book on it, and the last chapter was called the "Coping-stone." I do not know what they will do about it. Mr. Cassilis wants to have the money divided among the relations, I know. Isn't it odd? And he has so much already.'

'And I have got none.'

'O Jack, take some of mine—do! I know I have such a lot somewhere; and I never spend anything.'

'You are very good, Phil; but that will hardly be right. But do you know it is five o'clock? We have been talking for three hours. I must go—alas, I must go!'

'And you have told me nothing at all yet about Mr. Colquhoun.'

'When I see you next I will tell you what I know of him. Good-bye, Phil.'

'Jack, come and see me again soon.'

'When may I come? Not to-morrow — that would be too soon. The day after. Phil, make me the likeness, and send it to me by post. I forgot; you cannot write.'

He wrote his address on a sheet of foolscap.

'Fold it in that, with this address outside, and post it to me. Come again, Phil? I should like to come every day, and stay all day.'

He pressed her hand and was gone.

Phillis remained standing where he left her. What had happened to her? Why did she feel so oppressed? Why did the tears crowd her eyes?

Five o'clock. It wanted an hour of dinner, when she would have to talk to the Twin-brethren. She gathered up her drawings and retreated to her own room. As she passed Humphrey's door, she heard him saying to Jane:

'The tea, Jane? Have I really been asleep A most extraordinary thing for me.'

'Now he will see the drawing of the "Artist at work,"' thought Phillis. But she did not laugh at the idea, as she had done when she perpetrated the joke. She had suddenly grown graver.

She began her own likeness at once. But she could not satisfy herself. She tore up half a dozen beginnings. Then she changed her mind. She

drew a little group of two. One was a young man, tall, shapely, gallant, with a queer attractive face, who held the hands of a girl in his, and was bending over her. Somehow a look of love, a strange and new expression, which she had never seen before in human eyes, lay in his. She blushed while she drew her own face looking up in that other, and yet she drew it faithfully, and was only half conscious how sweet a face she drew and how like it was her own. Nor could she understand why she felt ashamed.

'Come again soon, Jack.'

The words rang in the young man's ears, but they rang like bells of accusation and reproach. This girl, so sweet, so fresh, so unconventional, what would she think when she learned, as she must learn some day, how great was his sin against her? And what would Lawrence Colquhoun say? And what would the lawyer say? And what would the world say?

The worst was that his repentance would not take the proper course. He did not repent of taking her hands — he trembled and thrilled when he thought of it—he only repented of the swiftness with which the thing was done, and was afraid of the consequences.

'And I am only a Younger Son, Tommy'—he made his plaint to Ladds, who received a full confession of the whole—'only a Younger Son, with four hundred a year. And she's got fifty thousand. They will say I wanted her money. I wish she had none. I wish she had nothing but the sweet gray dress—'

'Jack, don't blaspheme. Goodness sometimes palls; beauty always fades; gray dresses certainly wear out; figures alter for the worse; the funds remain. I am always thankful for the thought which inspired Ladds' Perfect Cocoa. The only true Fragrance. Aroma and Nutrition.'

Humphrey did not discover the little sketch before dinner, so that his conversation was as animated and as artistic as usual. At two o'clock in the morning he discovered it. And at three o'clock the Twins, after discussing the picture with its scoffing legend in all its bearings, went to bed sorrowful.

CHAPTER X.

> 'I have in these rough words shaped out a man
> Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug
> With amplest entertainment.'

Mr. Gabriel Cassilis, who, like Julius Cæsar and other illustrious men, was always spoken of by both his names, stepped from his carriage at the door of the Langham Hotel and slowly walked up the stairs to Mr. Beck's room. He looked older, longer, and thinner in the morning than in the evening. He carried his hands behind him and bore a look of pre-occupation and care. The man of unlimited credit was waiting for him, and, with his first cigar, pacing the room with his hands in his pockets.

'I got your letter,' said Mr. Cassilis, 'and telegraphed to you because I was anxious not to miss you. My time is valuable—not so valuable as yours, but still worth something.'

He spread his hands palm downwards, and at right angles to the perpendicular line of his body, had that been erect. But it was curved, like the figure of the man with the forelock.

'Still worth something,' he repeated. 'But I am here, Mr. Beck, and ready to be of any service that I can.'

'My time is worth nothing,' said the American, 'because my work is done for me. When I was paid by the hour, it was worth the hour's pay.'

'But now,' Mr. Cassilis interposed, 'it is worth at the rate of your yearly income. And I observe that you have unlimited credit—un-lim-it-ed credit. That is what we should hardly give to a Rothschild.'

He wanted to know what unlimited credit really meant. It was a thing hitherto beyond his experience.

'It is my Luck,' said Mr. Beck. 'Ile, as everybody knows, is not to be approached. You may grub for money like a Chinee, and you may scheme for it like a Boss in a whisky-ring. But for a steady certain flow there is nothing like Ile. And I, sir, have struck Ile as it never was struck before, because my well goes down to the almighty reservoir of this great world.'

'I congratulate you, Mr. Beck.'

'And I have ventured, sir, on the strength of that introductory letter to ask you for advice. "Mr. Cassilis," I was told, "has the biggest head in all London for knowledge of money." And, as I am

going to be the biggest man in all the States for income, I come to you.'

'I am not a professional adviser, Mr. Beck. What I could do for you would not be a matter of business. It is true that, as a friend only, I might advise you as to investments. I could show you where to place money and how to use it.'

'Sir, you double the obligation. In America we do nothing without an equivalent. Here men seem to work as hard without being paid as those who get wages. Why, sir, I hear that young barristers do the work of others and get nothing for it; doctors work for nothing in hospitals; and authors write for publishers and get nothing from them. This is a wonderful country.'

Mr. Cassilis, at any rate, had never worked for nothing. Nor did he propose to begin now. But he did not say so.

He sat nursing his leg, looking up at the tall American who stood over him. They were two remarkable faces, that thus looked into each other. The American's was grave and even stern. But his eyes were soft. The Englishman's was grave also. But his eyes were hard. They were not stealthy, as of one contemplating a fraud, but they were curious and watchful, as of one who is about to

strike and is looking for the fittest place—that is, the weakest.

'Will you take a drink, Mr. Cassilis?'

'A—a—a drink?' The invitation took him aback altogether, and disturbed the current of his thoughts. 'Thank you, thank you. Nothing.'

'In the silver-mines I've seen a man threatened with a bowie for refusing a drink. And I've known temperate men anxious for peace take drinks, when they were offered, till their back teeth were under whisky. But I know your English custom, Mr. Cassilis. When you don't feel thirsty you say so. Now let us go on, sir.'

'Our New York friend tells me, Mr. Beck, that you would find it difficult to spend your income.'

Mr. Beck brightened. He sat down and assumed a confidential manner.

'That's the hitch. That's what I am here for. In America you may chuck a handsome pile on yourself. But when you get out of yourself, unless you were to buy a park for the people in the centre of New York City, I guess you would find it difficult to get rid of your money.'

'It depends mainly on the amount of that money.'

'We'll come to figures, sir, and you shall judge as

my friendly adviser. My bar'ls bring me in, out of my first well, 2500 dollars, and that's 500*l.*, a day, without counting Sundays. And there's a dozen wells of mine around, not so good, that are worth between them another 800*l.* a day.'

Mr. Cassilis gasped.

'Do you mean, Mr. Beck, do you actually mean that you are drawing a profit, a clear profit of more than 1300*l.* a day from your rock-oil shafts?'

'That is it, sir—that is the lowest figure. Say 1500*l.* a day.'

'And how long has this been going on?'

'Close upon ten months.'

Mr. Cassilis produced a pencil and made a little calculation.

'Then you are worth at this moment, allowing for Sundays, at least a quarter of a million sterling.'

'Wal, I think it is near that figure. We can telegraph to New York, if you like, to find out. I don't quite know within a hundred thousand.'

'And a yearly income of 500,000*l.*, Mr. Beck!' said Mr. Cassilis, rising solemnly. 'Let me—allow me to shake hands with you again. I had no idea, not the slightest idea, in asking you to my house the other day, that I was entertaining a man of so much weight and such enormous power.'

He shook hands with a mixture of deference and friendship. Then he looked again, with a watchful glance, at the tall and wiry American with the stern face, the grave eyes, the mobile lips, and the muscular frame, and sat down and began to soliloquise.

'We are accustomed to think that nothing can compare with the great landholders of this country and Austria. There are two or three incomes perhaps in Europe, not counting crowned heads, which approach your own, Mr. Beck, but they are saddled. Their owners have great houses to keep up; armies of servants to maintain; estates to nurse; dilapidations to make good; farmers to satisfy; younger sons to provide for; poor people to help by hundreds; and local charities to assist. Why, I do not believe, when all has been provided for, that a great man, say the Duke of Berkshire, with coal-mines and quarries, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, and English estates, has more to put by at the end of the year than many a London merchant.'

'That is quite right,' said Mr. Beck: 'a merchant must save, because he may crack up; but the land don't run away. When you want stability, you must go to the Airth. Outside there's the fields, the rivers, the hills. Inside there's the mines, and there's Ile for those who can strike it.'

'What an income!' Mr. Cassilis went on. 'Nothing to squander it on. No duties and no responsibilities. No tenants; no philanthropy; no frittering away of capital. You *can't* spend a tenth part of it on yourself. And the rest accumulates and grows—grows—spreads and grows.' He spread out his own hands, and a flush of envy came into his cheeks. 'Mr. Beck, I congratulate you again.'

'Thank you, sir.'

'I see, Mr. Beck—you are yet an unmarried man, I believe, and without children—I foresee boundless possibilities. You may marry and found a great family; you may lay yourself out for making a fortune so great that it may prove a sensible influence on the course of events. You may bequeath to your race the tradition of good fortune and the habit of making money.'

'My sons may take care of themselves,' said Mr. Beck; 'I want to spend money, not to save it.'

It was remarkable that during all this generous outburst of vicarious enthusiasm Mr. Beck's face showed no interest whatever. He had his purpose, but it was not the purpose of Mr. Cassilis. To found a family, to become a Rothschild, to contract loans—what were these things to a man who felt strongly that he had but one life, that he wished to

make the most of it, and that the world after him might get on as it could without his posthumous interference?

'Listen, Mr. Beck, for one moment. Your income is 500,000*l.* a year. You may spend on your own simple wants 5000*l.* Bah! a trifle — not a quarter of the interest. You save the whole; in ten years you have three millions. You are still under fifty?'

'Forty-five, sir.'

'I wish I was forty-five. You may live and work for another quarter of a century. In that time you ought to be worth twelve millions at least. Twelve millions!'

'Nearly as much as ran away and was lost when the Ile was struck,' said Mr. Beck. 'Hardly worth while to work for five-and-twenty years in order to save what Nature spent in three days, is it?'

What, says the proverb, is easily got is lightly regarded. This man made money so easily that he despised the slow gradual building up of an immense fortune.

'There is nothing beyond the reach of a man with twelve millions,' Mr. Cassilis went on. 'He may rule the world, so long as there are poor states with vast armies who want to borrow. Why, at the

present moment a man with twelve millions at his command could undertake a loan with Russia, Austria, Turkey, Italy, or Egypt. He could absolutely govern the share market; he could rule the bank rate—'

Mr. Beck interrupted, quite unmoved by these visions of greatness:

'Wal, sir, I am not ambitious, and I leave Providence to manage the nations her own way. I might meddle and muss till I busted up the whole concern; play, after all, into the hands of the devil, and have the people praying to get back to their old original Providence.'

'Or suppose,' Mr. Cassilis went on, his imagination fired with the contemplation of possibilities so far beyond his own reach—'suppose you were to buy up land—to buy all that comes into the market. Suppose you were to hand down to your sons a traditional policy of buying land with the established principle of primogeniture. In twenty years you might have great estates in twenty counties—'

'I could have half a state,' said Mr. Beck, 'if I went out West.'

'In your own lifetime you could control an election, make yourself President, carry your own prin-

ciples, force your opinions on the country, and become the greatest man in it.'

'The greatest country in the world is the United States of America—that is a fact,' said Mr. Beck, laughing; 'so the greatest man in it must be the greatest man in the world. I calculate that's a bitter reflection for Prince Bismarck when he goes to bed at night; also for the Emperor of all the Russias. And perhaps your Mr. Gladstone would like to feel himself on the same level with General Ulysses Grant.'

'Mr. Beck,' cried Mr. Cassilis, rising to his feet in an irrepressible burst of genuine enthusiasm, and working his right hand round exactly as if he was really Father Time, whom he so much resembled —'Mr. Beck, I consider you the most fortunate man in the world. We slowly amass money—for our sons to dissipate. Save when a title or an ancient name entails a conservative tradition which keeps the property together, the process in this country and in yours is always the same. The strong men climb, and the weak men fall. And even to great houses like the Grosvenors, which have been carried upwards by a steady tide of fortune, there will surely one day come a fool, and then the tide will turn. But for you and yours, Mr. Beck, Nature pours out her inexhaustible treasures—'

'She does, sir—in Ile.'

'You may spend, but your income will always go on increasing.'

'To a certain limit, sir—to five thousand and fifty-three years. I have had it reckoned by one of our most distinguished mathematicians, Professor Hercules Willemott, of Cyprus University, Wisconsin. He made the calculations for me.'

'Limit or not, Mr. Beck, you are now a most fortunate man. And I shall be entirely at your service. I believe,' he added modestly, 'that I have some little reputation in financial circles.'

'That is so, sir. And now let me put my case.' Mr. Beck became once more animated and interested. 'Suppose, sir, I was to say to you, "I have more than enough money. I will take the Luck of the Golden Butterfly and make it the Luck of other people." '

'I do not understand,' said Mr. Cassilis.

'Sir, what do you do with your own money? You do not spend it all on yourself.'

'I use it to make more.'

'And when you have enough?'

'We look at things from a different point of view, Mr. Beck. *You* have enough; but I, whatever be my success, can never approach the fourth part of your income. However, let me understand what

you want to do, and I will give such advice as I can offer.'

'That's kind, sir, and what I expected of you. It is a foolish fancy, and perhaps you'll laugh; but I have heard day and night, ever since the Ile began to run, a Voice which says to me always the same thing—I think it is the voice of my Golden Butterfly: "What you can't spend, give." "What you can't spend, give." That's my duty, Mr. Cassilis; that's the path marked out before me, plain and shinin' as the way to heaven. What I can't spend, I must give. I've given nothing as yet. And I am here in this country of giving to find out how to do it.'

'We—I mean the—the—' Mr. Cassilis was on the point of saying the 'idiots,' but refrained in time. 'The people who give money send it to charities and institutions.'

'I know that way, sir. It is like paying a priest to say your prayers for you.'

'When the secretaries get the money they pay themselves their own salaries first; then they pay for the rent, the clerks, and the advertising. What remains goes to the charity.'

'That is so, sir; and I do not like that method. I want to go right ahead; find out what to do, and

then do it. But I must feel like giving, whatever I do.'

'Your countryman, Mr. Peabody, gave his money in trust for the London poor. Would you like to do the same?'

'No, sir; I should not like to imitate that example. Mr. Peabody was a great man, and he meant well; but I want to work for myself. Let a man do all the good and evil he has to do in his lifetime, not leave his work dragging on after he is dead. "They that go down into the pit cannot hope for the truth." Do you remember that text, Mr. Cassilis? It means that you must not wait till you are dead to do what you have to do.'

Mr. Cassilis altered his expression, which was before of a puzzled cheerfulness, as if he failed to see his way, into one of unnatural solemnity. It is the custom of certain Englishmen if the Bible is quoted. He knew no more than Adam what part of the Bible it came from. But he bowed, and pulled out his handkerchief as if he was at a funeral. In fact, this unexpected hurling of a text at his head floored him for the moment.

Mr. Beck was quite grave and in much earnestness.

'There is another thing. If I leave this money

in trust, how do I know that my purpose will be carried out? In a hundred years things will get mixed. My bequests may be worth millions, or they may be worth nothing. The lawyers may fight over the letter of the will, and the spirit may be neglected.'

'It is the Dead Hand that you dread.'

'That may be so, sir. You air in the inside track, and you ought to know what to call it. But no Hand, dead or alive, shall ever get hold of my stamps.'

'Your stamps?'

'My stamps, sir; my greenbacks, my dollars. For I've got them, and I mean to spend them. "Spend what you can, and give what you cannot spend," says the Voice to Gilead P. Beck.'

'But, my dear sir, if you mean to give away a quarter of a million a year, you will have every improvident and extravagant rogue in the country about you. You will have to answer hundreds of letters a day. You will be deluged with prospectuses, forms, and appeals. You will be called names unless you give to this institution or to that—'

'I shall give nothing to any society.'

'And what about the widows of clergymen, the daughters of officers, the nieces of Church digni-

taries, the governess who is starving, the tradesman who wants a hundred pounds for a fortnight, and will repay you with blessings and 25 per cent after depositing in your hand as security all his pawn-tickets?'

'Every boat wants steering, but I was not born last Sunday, and the ways of big cities, though they may be crooked, air pretty well known by me. There are not many lines of life in which Gilead P. Beck has not tried to walk.'

'My dear sir, do you propose to act the part of Universal Philanthropist and Distributor at large?'

'No, sir, I do not. And that puzzles me too. I should like to be quiet over it. There was a man down to Lexington, when I was a boy, who said he liked his religion unostentatious. So he took a pipe on a Sunday morning and sat in the churchyard listening to the bummin' and the singin' within. Perhaps, sir, that man knew his own business. Perhaps thoughts came over his soul when they gave out the Psalm that he wouldn't have had if he'd gone inside, to sit with his back upright against a plank, his legs curled up below the seat, and his eyes wandering around among the gells. Maybe that is my case too, Mr. Cassilis. I should like my giving to be unostentatious.'

'Give what you cannot spend,' said Mr. Cassilis. 'There are at any rate plenty of ways of spending. Let us attend to them first.'

'And there's another thing, sir,' Mr. Beck went on, shifting his feet and looking uneasy and distressed. 'It's on my mind since I met the young gentleman at your house. I want to do something big, something almighty big, for Mr. Ronald Dunquerque.'

'Because he killed the bear?'

'Yes, sir, because he saved my life. Without that shot the Luck of Gilead P. Beck would have been locked up for ever in that little box where the Golden Butterfly used to live. What can I do for him? Is the young gentleman rich?'

'On the contrary, I do not suppose—his brother is one of the poorest peers in the House—that the Honourable Mr. Ronald Dunquerque is worth 500*l.* a year. Really, I should say that 300*l.* would be nearer the mark.'

'Then he is a gentleman, and I am—well, sir, I hope I am learning what a gentleman should do and think in such a position as the Golden Butterfly has brought me into. But the short of it is that I can't say to him, Mr. Dunquerque, I owe you a life, and here is a cheque for so many thousand dollars. I can't do it, sir.'

'I suppose not. But there are ways of helping a young man forward without giving him money. You can only give money to poets and clergymen.'

'That is so, sir.'

'Wait a little till your position is known and assured. You will then be able to assist Mr. Ronald Dunquerque as much as you please.' He rose and took up his gloves. 'And now, Mr. Beck, I think I understand you. You wish to do something great with your money. Very good. Do not be in a hurry. I will think things over. Meantime are you going to let it lie idle in the bank?'

'Wal, yes; I was thinking of that.'

'It would be much better for me to place it for you in good shares, such as I could recommend to you. You would then be able to—to—give away'—he pronounced the words with manifest reluctance—'the interest as well as the principal. Why should the bankers have the use of it?'

'That seems reasonable,' said Mr. Beck.

Mr. Cassilis straightened himself and looked him full in the face. He was about to strike his blow.

'You will place your money,' he said quietly, as if there could be no doubt of Mr. Beck's immediate assent, 'in my hands for investment. I shall recom-

mend you safe things. For instance, as regards the shares of the George Washington Silver Mine—'

He opened his pocket-book.

'No, sir,' said Mr. Beck with great decision.

'I was about to observe that I should not recommend such an investment. I think, however, I could place immediately 20,000*l.* in the Isle of Man Internal Navigation Company.'

'An English company?' said Mr. Beck.

'Certainly. I propose, Mr. Beck, to devote this morning to a consideration of investments for you. I shall advise you from day to day. I have no philanthropic aims, and financing is my profession. But your affairs shall be treated together with mine, and I shall bring to bear upon them the same—may I say insight?—that has carried my own ventures to success. For this morning I shall only secure you the Isle of Man shares.'

They presently parted, with many expressions of gratitude from Mr. Gilead Beck.

A country where men work for nothing? Perhaps when men are young. Not a country where elderly men in the City work for nothing. Mr. Cassilis had no intention whatever of devoting his time and experience to the furtherance of Mr. Beck's affairs. Not at all: if the thoughts in his mind had been

written down, they would have shown a joy almost boyish in the success of his morning visit.

'The Isle of Man Company,' we should have read, 'is floated. That 20,000*l.* was a lucky coup. I nearly missed my chances with the silver mine; I ought to have known that he was not likely to jump at such a bait. A quarter of a million of money to dispose of, and five hundred thousand pounds a year. And mine the handling of the whole. Never before was such a chance known in the City.'

A thought struck him. He turned, and went back hastily to Gilead Beck's rooms.

'One word more. Mr. Beck, I need hardly say that I do not wish to be known as your adviser at all. Perhaps it would be well to keep our engagements a secret between ourselves.'

That of course was readily promised.

'Half a million a year!' the words jangled in his brain like the chimes of St. Clement's. 'Half a million a year! And mine the handling.'

He spent the day locked up in his inner office. He saw no one, except his secretary, and he covered an acre or so of paper with calculations. His clerks went away at five; his secretary left him at six; at ten he was still at work, feverishly at work, making combinations and calculating results.

'What a chance!' he murmured prayerfully, putting down his pen at length. 'What a blessed chance!'

Mr. Gilead Beck would have congratulated himself on the disinterested assistance of his unprofessional adviser had he known that the whole day was devoted to himself. He might have congratulated himself less had he known the thoughts that filled the financier's brains.

Disinterested? How could Mr. Cassilis regard any one with money in his hand but as a subject for his skill? And here was a man coming to him, not with his little fortune of a few thousands, not with the paltry savings of a lifetime, not for an investment for widows and orphans, but with a purse immeasurable and bottomless, a purse which he was going to place unreservedly in his hands.

'Mine the handling,' he murmured as he got into bed. It was his evening hymn of praise and joy.

CHAPTER XI.

> 'Higher she climb'd, and far below her stretch'd
> Hill beyond hill, with lengthening slopes and glades,
> And a world widening still.'

Phillis's world widened daily, like a landscape, which stretches ever farther the higher you mount. Every morning brought her fresh delights, something more wonderful than she had seen the day before. Her portfolio of drawings swelled daily; but with riches came discontent, because the range of subjects grew too vast for her pencil to draw, and her groups became every day more difficult and more complicated. Life was a joy beyond all that she had ever hoped for or expected. How should it be otherwise to her? She had no anxieties for the future; she had no past sins to repent; she had no knowledge of evil; she was young and in perfect health; the weight of her mortality was as yet unfelt.

During these early days of emancipation she was mostly silent, looking about and making observations. She sat alone and thought; she forgot to sing; if she played, it was as if she was communing confi-

dentially with a friend, and seeking counsel. She had so much to think of: herself, and the new current of thoughts into which her mind had been suddenly diverted; the connection between the world of Mr. Dyson's teaching and the world of reality—this was a very hard thing; Mrs. Cassilis, with her hard cold manner, her kind words, and her eternal teaching that the spring of feminine action is the desire to attract; finally, Jack Dunquerque. And of him she thought a good deal.

All the people she met were interesting. She tried to give each one his own individuality, rounded and complete. But she could not. Her experience was too small, and each figure in her mind was blurred. Now if you listen to the conversation of people, as I do perpetually—in trains especially—you will find that they are always talking about other people. The reason of that I take to be the natural desire to have in your brain a clear idea of every man, what he is, and how he is likely to be acted upon. Those people are called interesting who are the most difficult to describe or imagine, and who, perpetually breaking out in new places, disturb the image which their friends have formed.

None of Phillis's new friends would photograph clear and distinct in her brain. She thought she

missed the focus. It was not so, however; it was the fault of the lens. But it troubled her, because if she tried to draw them there was always a sense of something wanting. Even Jack Dunquerque—and here her eyes brightened—had points about him which she could not understand. She was quiet, therefore, and watched.

It was pleasant only to watch and observe. She had made out clearly by this time that the Twins were as vain and self-conscious as the old peacock she used to feed at Highgate. She found herself bringing out their little vanities by leading questions. She knew that Joseph Jagenal, whom in their souls the Twins despised, was worth them both ten times over; and she found that Joseph rated himself far beneath his brothers. Then she gradually learned that their æsthetic talk was soon exhausted, but that they loved to enunciate the same old maxims over and over again, as children repeat a story. And it became one of her chief pleasures to listen to them at dinner, to mark their shallowness, and to amuse herself with their foibles. The Twins thought the young lady was fascinated by their personal excellences.

'Genius, brother Cornelius,' said Humphrey, 'always makes its way. I see Phillis Fleming every night waiting upon your words.'

'I think the fascinations of Art are as great, brother Humphrey. At dinner Phillis Fleming watches your every gesture.'

This was in the evening. In the morning every walk was a new delight in itself; every fresh street was different. Brought up for thirteen years within the same four walls, the keenest joy which the girl could imagine was variety. She loved to see something new, even a new disposition of London houses, even a minute difference in the aspect of a London square. But of all the pleasures which she had yet experienced—even a greater pleasure than the single picture-gallery which she had visited—was the one afternoon of shopping she had had with Mrs. Cassilis at Melton & Mowbray's in Regent-street.

Mrs. Cassilis took her there first on the morning of her dinner-party. It was her second drive through the streets of London, but an incomparably superior journey to the first. The thoroughfares were more crowded; the shops were grander; if there were fewer boys running and whistling, there were picturesque beggars, Punch-and-Judy shows, Italian noblemen with organs, and the other humours and diversions of the great main arteries of London. Phillis looked at all with the keenest delight, calling the attention of her companion to the common things

which escape our notice because we see them every day—the ragged broken-down old man without a hat, who has long gray locks, who sells oranges from a basket, and betrays by his bibulous trembling lips the secret history of his downfall; the omnibus full inside and out; the tall Guardsman swaggering down the street; the ladies looking in at the windows; the endless rows of that great and wonderful exhibition which benevolent tradesmen show gratuitously to all; the shopman rubbing his hands at the door; the foreigners and pilgrims in a strange land —he with a cigarette in his mouth, lately from the army of Don Carlos; he with a bad cigar, a blue-black shaven chin and cheek, and a seedy coat, who once adorned the ranks of Delescluze, Ferré, Flourens, and Company; he with the pale face and hard cynical smile, who hails from free and happy Prussia; the man, our brother, from Sierra Leone, coal-black of hue, with snowy linen and a conviction not to be shaken that all the world takes him for an Englishman; the booted Belgian, cross between the Dutchman and the Gaul; the young gentleman sent from Japan to study our country and its laws—he has a cigar in his mouth, and a young lady with yellow hair upon his arm; the Syrian, with a red cap and almond eyes; the Parsee, with lofty super-

structure, a reminiscence of the Tower of Babel, which his ancestors were partly instrumental in building; Cretes, Arabians, men of Cappadocia and Pontus, with all the other mingled nationalities which make up the strollers along a London street, —Phillis marked them every one, and only longed for a brief ten minutes with each in order to transfer his likeness to her portfolio.

'Phillis,' said her companion, touching her hand, 'can you practise looking at people without turning your head or seeming to notice?'

Phillis laughed, and tried to sit in the attitude of unobservant carelessness which was the custom in other carriages. Like all first attempts, it was a failure. Then the great and crowded street reminded her of her dream. Should she presently—for it all seemed unreal together—begin to run while the young men, among whom were the Twins, ran after her? And should she at the finish of the race, see the form of dead old Abraham Dyson, clapping his hands and wagging his head, and crying, 'Well run! well won! Phillis, it is the Coping-stone'?

'This is Melton & Mowbray's,' said Mrs. Cassilis, as the carriage drew up in front of a shop which contained greater treasures than were ever collected for the harem of Assyrian king.

She followed Mrs. Cassilis to some show-rooms, in which lay about carelessly things more beautiful than she had ever conceived; hues more brilliant, textures more delicate, than she knew.

Phillis's first shopping was an event to be remembered in all her after-life. What she chose, what Mrs. Cassilis chose for her, what Joseph Jagenal thought when the bill came in, it boots not here to tell. Imagine only the delight of a girl of deep and artistic feeling which has hitherto chiefly found vent in the study of form—such form as she could get from engravings and her own limited powers of observation—in being let loose suddenly in a wilderness of beautiful things. Every lady knows Messrs. Melton & Mowbray's great shop. Does anybody ever think what it would seem were they to enter it for the first time at the mature age of nineteen?

In one thing only did Phillis disgrace herself. There was a young person in attendance for the purpose of showing off all sorts of draperies upon her own back and shoulders. Phillis watched her for some time. She had a singularly graceful figure and a patient face, which struck Phillis with pity. Mrs. Cassilis sat studying the effect through her double eyeglasses. The saleswoman put on and took off the things as if the girl were really a lay-figure,

which she was, excepting that she turned herself about, a thing not yet achieved by any lay-figure. A patient face, but it looked pale and tired. The 'Duchess'—living lay-figures receive that title, in addition to a whole pound a week which Messrs. Melton & Mowbray generously give them—stood about the rooms all day, and went to bed late at night. Some of the other girls envied her. This shows that there is no position in life which has not something beneath it.

Presently Phillis rose suddenly, and taking the opera-cloak which the Duchess was about to put on, said:

'You are tired. I will try it on myself. Pray sit down and rest.'

And she actually placed a chair for the shop-girl.

Mrs. Cassilis gave a little jump of surprise. It had never occurred to her that a shop-woman could be entitled to any consideration at all. She belonged to the establishment; the shop and all that it contained were at the service of those who bought; the *personnel* was a matter for Messrs. Melton & Mowbray to manage.

But she recovered her presence of mind in a moment.

'Perhaps it will be as well,' she said, 'to see how it suits you, by trying it on yourself.'

When their purchases were concluded and they were coming away, Phillis turned to the poor Duchess, and asked her if she was not very tired of trying on dresses, and whether she would not like to take a rest, and if she was happy, with one or two other questions; at which the saleswoman looked a little indignant, and the Duchess a little inclined to cry.

And then they came away.

'It is not usual, Phillis,' said Mrs. Cassilis, directly they were in the carriage, 'for ladies to speak to shop-people.'

'Is it not? The poor girl looked pale and tired.'

'Very likely she was. She is paid to work, and work is fatiguing. But it was no concern of ours. You see, my dear, we cannot alter things; and if you once begin pitying people and talking to them, there is an end of all distinctions of class.'

'Mr. Dyson used to say that the difficulty of abolishing class distinctions was one of the most lamentable facts in human history. I did not understand then what he meant. But I think I do now. It is a dreadful thing, he meant, that one cannot speak to or relieve a poor girl who is ready to drop with fatigue, because she is a shop-girl. How sad

you must feel, Mrs. Cassilis, you who have seen so much of shop-assistants, if they are all like that poor girl!'

Mrs. Cassilis had not felt sad, but Phillis's remark made her feel for the moment uncomfortable. Her complacency was disturbed. But how could she help herself? She was what her surroundings had made her. As riches increase, particularly the riches which are unaccompanied by territorial obligations, men and women separate themselves more and more; the lines of demarcation become deeper and broader; English castes are divided by ditches constantly widening; the circles into which outsiders may enter as guests, but not as members, become more numerous; poor people herd more together; rich people live more apart; the latter become like gods in their seclusion, and they grow to hate more and more the sight and rumour of suffering. And the first step back to the unpitying cruelty of the old civilisations is the habit of looking on the unwashed as creatures of another world. If the gods of Olympus had known sympathy they might have lived till now.

This expedition occurred on the day of Phillis's first dinner-party, and on the way home a singular thing happened.

Mrs. Cassilis asked Phillis how long she was to stay with Mr. Jagenal.

'Until,' said Phillis, 'my guardian comes home; and that will be in a fortnight.'

'Your guardian, child? But he is dead.'

'I had two, you know. The other is Mr. Lawrence Colquhoun—What is the matter, Mrs. Cassilis?'

For she became suddenly pallid, and stared blankly before her, with no expression in her eyes, unless perhaps a look of terror. It was the second time that Phillis had noted a change in this cold and passionless face. Before, the face had grown suddenly soft and tender at a recollection; now, it was white and rigid.

'Lawrence Colquhoun!' she turned to Phillis, and hardly seemed to know what she was saying. 'Lawrence Colquhoun! He is coming home—and he promised me—no—he would not promise—and what will he say to me?'

Then she recovered herself with an effort. The name or the intelligence of Lawrence Colquhoun's return gave her a great shock.

'Mr. Colquhoun your guardian! I did not know. And he is coming home?'

'You will come and see me when I am staying—if I am to stay—at his house?'

'I shall certainly,' said Mrs. Cassilis, setting her lips together,—'I shall certainly make a point of seeing Mr. Colquhoun on his return, whether you are staying with him or not. Here is Carnarvon-square. No, thank you, I will not get down, even to have a cup of tea with you. Good-bye, Phillis, till this evening. My dear, I think the white dress that you showed me will do admirably. Home at once.'

A woman of steel? Rubbish. There is no man or woman of steel, save him who has brooded too long over his own perfections. A metallic statue, the enemies of Mrs. Cassilis called her. They knew nothing. A woman who had always perfect control over herself, said her husband. He knew nothing. A woman who turned pale at the mention of a name, and longed, yet feared, to meet a man, thought Phillis. And she knew something, because she knew the weak point in this woman's armour. Being neither curious, nor malignant, nor a disciple in the school for scandal, Phillis drew her little conclusion, kept it to herself, and thought no more about it.

As for the reasons which prompted Mrs. Cassilis to 'take up' Phillis Fleming, they were multiplex, like all the springs of action which move us to act.

She wanted to find out for her husband of what sort was this system of education which Joseph Jagenal could not discover anywhere. She was interested in, although not attracted by, the character of the girl, unlike any she had ever seen. And she wanted to use Phillis—an heiress, young, beautiful, piquante, strange—as an attraction to her house. For Mrs. Cassilis was ambitious. She wished to attract men to her evenings. She pictured herself—it is the dream of so many cultured women — as another Madame Recamier, Madame du Deffand, or Madame de Rambouillet. All the intellect in London was to be gathered in her *salon*. She caught lions; she got hold of young authors; she made beginnings with third-rate people who had written books. They were not amusing; they were not witty; they were devoured by envy and hatred. She let them drop, and now she wanted to begin again. An idle and a futile game. She had not the quick sympathies, the capacity for hero-worship, the lovableness of the Recamier. She had no tears for others. She did not know that the woman who aspires to lead men must first be able to be led.

There was another fatal objection, not fully understood by ladies who have 'evenings' and sigh over their empty rooms. In these days of clubs,

what man is going to get up after dinner and find his melancholy way from Pall Mall to Kensington-palace-gardens, in order to stand about a drawing-room for two hours and listen to 'general' talk? It wants a Phillis, and a personal, if hopeless, devotion to a Phillis, to tear the freshest lion from his club after dinner, even if it be to an altar of adulation. The evening begins properly with dinner: and where men dine they love to stay.

'Jack Dunquerque came to see me to-day,' Phillis told Joseph. 'You remember Mr. Dunquerque. He was at Mrs. Cassilis's last night. He came at two, to have luncheon and to tell me about Mr. Colquhoun; but he did not tell me anything about him. We talked about ourselves.'

'Is Mr. Dunquerque a friend of yours?'

'Yes; Jack and I are friends,' Phillis replied readily. There was not the least intention to deceive; but Joseph was deceived. He thought they had been old friends. Somehow, perhaps, Phillis did not like to talk very much about her friendship for Jack.

'I want you to ask him to dinner, if you will.'

'Certainly, whenever you please. I shall be glad to make Mr. Dunquerque's acquaintance. He is the brother of Lord Isleworth,' said Joseph, with a little

satisfaction at seeing a live member of the aristocracy at his own table.

Jack came to dinner. He behaved extremely well; made no allusion to that previous occasion when he had been introduced to the Twins; listened to their conversation as if it interested him above all things; and not once called Phillis by her Christian name. This omission made her reflect; they were therefore, it was apparent, only Jack and Phil when they were alone. It was her first secret, and the possession of it became a joy.

She had not a single word with him all the evening. Only before he went he asked her if he might call the next day at luncheon-time. She said him yea.

'After all these Bloomsbury people,' said Cornelius, lighting his first pipe, 'it does one good, brother Humphrey, to come across a gentleman. Mr. Ronald Dunquerque took the keenest interest in your Art criticisms at dinner.'

'They were general principles only, Cornelius,' said Humphrey. 'He is really a superior young man. A little modest in your presence, brother. To be sure, it is not every day that he finds himself dining with a Poet.'

'And an Artist, Humphrey.'

'Thank you, Cornelius. Miss Fleming had no charms for him, I think.'

'Phillis Fleming, brother, is a girl who is drawn more towards, and more attracts, men of a maturer age—men no longer perhaps within the *première jeunesse*, but still capable of love.'

'Men of our age, Cornelius. Shall we split this potash, or will you take some Apollinaris water?'

Jack called, and they took luncheon together as before. Phillis, brighter and happier, told him what things she had seen and what remarks she had made since last they met, a week ago. Then she told him of the things she most wished to see.

'Jack,' she said, 'I want to see the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey most.'

'And then, Phil?'

'Then I should like to see a play.'

'Would Mr. Jagenal allow me to take you to the Tower of London? Now, Phil—this afternoon?'

Phillis's worldly education was as yet so incomplete that she clapped her hands with delight.

'Shall we go now, Jack? How delightful! Of course Mr. Jagenal will allow you. I will be five minutes putting on my hat.'

'Now that's wrong too,' said Jack to himself.

'It is as wrong as calling her Phil. It's worse than wanting to kiss her, because the kiss never came off. I can't help it—it's pleasant. What will Colquhoun say when he comes home? Phil is sure to tell him everything. Jack Dunquerque, my boy, there will be a day of reckoning for you— Already, Phil? By Jove, how nice you look!'

'Do I, Jack? Do you like my hat? I bought it with Mrs. Cassilis the other day.'

'Look at yourself in the glass, Phil. What do you see?'

She looked and laughed. It was not for her to say what she saw.

'There was a little maid of Arcadia once, Phil, and she grew up so beautiful that all the birds fell in love with her. There were no other creatures except birds to fall in love with her, because her sheep were too busy fattening themselves for the Corinthian cattle-market to pay any attention to her. They were conscientious sheep, you see, and wished to do credit to the Arcadian pastures.' Jack Dunquerque began to feel great freedom in the allegorical method.

'Well, Jack?'

'Well, Phil, the birds flew about in the woods, singing to each other how lovely she was, how prettily she played, and how sweetly she sang.

Nobody understood what they said, but it pleased this little maid. Presently she grew a tall maid, like yourself, Phil. And then she came out into the world. She was just like you, Phil; she had the same bright eyes, and the same laugh, and the same identical sunlit face; and O, Phil, she had your very same charming ways!'

'Jack, do you really mean it? Do you like my face, and are my ways really and truly not rough and awkward?'

Jack shook his head.

'Your face is entrancing, Phil; and your ways are more charming than I can tell you. Well, she came into the world and looked about her. It was a pleasant world, she thought. And then— I think I will tell you the rest of the story another time, Phil.'

'Jack, did other people besides birds love your maid of Arcadia?'

'I'm afraid they did,' he groaned. 'A good many other people—confound them!'

Phil looked puzzled. Why did he groan? Why should not all the world love the Arcadian maid if they pleased?

Then they went out, Jack being rather silent.

'This is a great deal better than driving with

Mrs. Cassilis, Jack,' said the girl, as she made her first acquaintance with a hansom cab. 'It is like sitting in a chair, while all the people move past. Look at the faces, Jack; how they stare straight before them! Is work so dear to them that they cannot find time to look at each other?'

'Work is not dear to them at all, I think,' said Jack. 'If I were a clergyman I should talk nonsense and say that it is the race for gold. As a matter of fact, I believe it is a race for bread. Those hard faces have got wives and children at home, and life is difficult, that is all.'

Phillis was silent again.

They drove through the crowded City, where the roll of the vehicles thundered on the girl's astonished ears, and the hard-faced crowd sped swiftly past her. Life was too multitudinous, too complex, for her brain to take it in. The shops did not interest her now, nor the press of business; it was the never-ending rush of the anxious crowd. She tried to realise, if ever so faintly, that every one of their faces meant a distinct and important personality. It was too much for her, and, as it did to the Persian monarch, the multitudes brought tears into her eyes.

'Where are all the women?' she asked Jack at length.

'At home. These men are working for them. They are spending the money which their husbands and fathers fight for.'

She was silent again.

The crowd diminished, but not much; the street grew narrower. Presently they came to an open space, and beyond—O, joy of joys!—the Tower of London, which she knew from the pictures.

Only country people go to the Tower of London. It would almost seem a kindness to London readers were I to describe this national gaudy-show. But it is better, perhaps, that its splendours should remain unknown, like those of the National Gallery and the British Museum. The solitudes of London are not too many, and its convenient trysting places are few. The beefeater who conducted the flock attached himself specially to Phillis, thereby showing that good taste has found a home among beefeaters. Phillis asked him a thousand questions. She was eager to see everything. She begged him to take them slowly down the long line of armoured warriors; she did not care for the arms, except for such as she had heard about, as bows and arrows, pikes, battle-axes, and spears. She lingered in the room where Sir Walter Raleigh was confined; she studied the construction of the headsman's axe and the

block; she glowed with delight at finding herself in the old chapel of the White Tower. Jack did not understand her enthusiasm. It was his own first visit also to the Tower, but he was unaffected by its historical associations. Nor did he greatly care for the arms and armour.

Think of Phillis. Her guardian's favourite lessons to her had been in history. He would read her passages at which her pulse would quicken and her eyes light up. Somehow these seemed all connected with the Tower. She constructed an imaginary Tower in her own mind, and peopled it with the ghosts of martyred lords and suffering ladies. But the palace of her soul was as nothing compared with the grim gray fortress that she saw. The knights of her imagination were poor creatures compared with these solid heroes of steel and iron on their wooden chargers; the dungeon in which Raleigh pined was far more gloomy than any she had pictured; the ghosts of slain rebels and murdered princes gained in her imagination a place and surroundings worthy of their haunts. The first sight of London which an American visits is the Tower; the first place which the boy associates with the past, and longs to see, is that old pile beside the Thames.

Phillis came away at length, with a sigh of in-

finite satisfaction. On the way home she said nothing; but Jack saw, by her absorbed look, that the girl was happy. She was adjusting, bit by bit, her memories and her fancies with the reality. She was trying to fit the stories her guardian had read her so often with the chambers and the courts she had just seen.

Jack watched her stealthily. A great wave of passion rolled over the heart of this young man whenever he looked at this girl. He loved her; there was no longer any possible doubt of that; and she only liked him. What a difference! And to think that the French have only one word for both emotions! She liked to be with him, to talk to him, because he was young and she could talk to him. But love? Cold Dian was not more free from love.

'I can make most of it out,' the girl said, turning to Jack. 'All except Lady Jane Grey. I cannot understand at all about her. You must take me again. We will get that dear old beefeater all by himself, and we will spend the whole day there, you and I together, shall we not?'

Then, after her wont, she put the Tower out of her mind and began to talk about what she saw. They passed a printseller's. She wanted to look at

a picture in the window, and Jack stopped the cab and took her into the shop.

He observed, not without dismay, that she had not the most rudimentary ideas on the subject of purchase. She had only once been in a shop, and then, if I remember rightly, the bill was sent to Mr. Joseph Jagenal. Phillis turned over the engravings and photographs, and selected half a dozen.

Jack paid the bill next day. It was not much over fifteen pounds—a mere trifle to a Younger Son with four hundred a year. And then he had the pleasure of seeing the warm glow of pleasure in her eyes as she took the 'Light of the World' from the portfolio. Pictures were her books, and she took them home to read.

At last, and all too soon, they came back to Carnarvon-square.

'Good-bye, Phil,' said Jack, before he knocked at the door. 'You have had a pleasant day?'

'Very pleasant, Jack; and all through you,' she replied. 'O, what a good thing for me that we became friends!'

He thought it might in the end be a bad thing for himself, but he did not say so. For every hour plunged the unhappy young man deeper in the ocean of love, and he grew more than ever conscious that

the part he at present played would not be regarded with favour by her guardian.

'Jack,' she said, while her hand rested in his, and her frank eyes looked straight in his face with an expression in which there was no love at all—he saw that clearly—but only free and childlike affection,—'Jack—why do you look at me so sadly?—Jack, if I were like—if I were meant for that maiden of Arcadia you told me of—'

'Yes, Phil?'

'If other people in the world loved me, you would love me too a little, wouldn't you?'

CHAPTER XII.

'Hearken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm."
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?'

Lawrence Colquhoun was coming home. Phillis, counting the days, remembered, with a little prick of conscience, that Jack Dunquerque had never told her a single word concerning her second guardian. He was about forty years of age, as old as Joseph Jagenal. She pictured a grave heavy man, with massive forehead, thick black hair, and a responsible manner. She knew too that there was to be a change in her life, but of what kind she could not tell. The present mode of living was happiness enough for her: a drive with Mrs. Cassilis—odd that Phillis could never remove from herself the impression that Mrs. Cassilis disliked her; a walk with Joseph to his office and back in the morning; a day of occasional delight with her best friend, Jack the unscrupulous; her drawing for amusement and occupation; and a widely-increased area, so to speak, of dress discussion with her maid.

Antoinette, once her fellow-prisoner, now emancipated like herself, informed her young mistress that should the new guardian insist on a return to captivity, she, Antoinette, would immediately resign. Her devotion to Phillis, she explained, was unalterable; but, contrary to the experience of the bard, stone walls, in her own case, did make a prison. Was Mademoiselle going to resign all these pleasures? —she pointed to the evening-dresses, the walking-dresses, the riding-habits—was Mademoiselle about to give up taking walks when and where she pleased? was Mademoiselle ready to let the young gentleman, Monsieur Dunquerque, waste his life in regrets—and he so brave, so good? Antoinette, it may be observed, had, in the agreeable society of Jane the housemaid, Clarissa the cook, and Victoria Pamela, assistant in either department, already received enlightenment in the usages of London courtship. She herself, a little flirt with the Norman blue eyes and light-brown hair, was already the object of a devouring passion on the part of a young gentleman who cut other gentlemen's hair in a neighbouring street. Further, did Mademoiselle reflect on the wickedness of burying herself and her beautiful eyes out of everybody's sight?

A change was inevitable. Phillis would willingly

have stayed on at Carnarvon-square, where the Twins amused her, and the lawyer Joseph was kind to her. But Mrs. Cassilis explained that this was impossible; that steps would have to be taken with regard to her future; and that the wishes of her guardian must be consulted till she was of age.

'You are now nineteen, my dear. You have two years to wait. Then you will come into possession of your fortune, and you will be your own mistress, at liberty to live where and how you please.'

Phillis listened, but made no reply. It was a new thought to her that in two years she would be personally responsible for the conduct and management of her own life, obliged to think and decide for herself, and undertaking all the responsibilities and consequences of her own actions. Then she remembered Abraham Dyson's warning and maxims. They once fell unheeded on her brain, which was under strict ward and tutelage, just like exhortations to avoid the sins of the world on the ears of convent girls. Now she remembered them.

'Life is made up of meeting bills drawn on the future by the improvidence of youth.'

This was a very mysterious maxim, and one which had often puzzled her. Now she began to understand what was meant.

'The consequences of our own actions are what men call fate. They accompany us like our shadows.'

Hitherto, she thought, she had had no chance of performing any action of her own at all. She forgot how she asked Jack Dunquerque to luncheon and went to the Tower with him.

'Every moment of a working life may be a decisive victory.'

That would begin in two years' time.

'Brave men act; philosophers discuss; cowards run away. The brave are often killed; the talkers are always left behind; the cowards are caught and cashiered.'

Better to act and be killed than to run away and be disgraced, thought Phillis. That was a thing to be remembered in two years' time.

'Women see things through the haze of a foolish education. They manage their affairs badly because they are unable to reason. You, Phillis, who have never learned to read, are the mistress of your own mind. Keep it clear. Get information and remember it. Learn by hearing and watching.'

She was still learning—learning something new every day.

'It is not in my power to complete your educa-

tion, Phillis. That must be done by some one else. When it is finished you will understand the whole. But do not be in a hurry.'

When would the finisher of her education come? Was it Lawrence Colquhoun? And how would it be finished? Surely some time in the next two years would complete the edifice, and she would step out into the world at twenty-one, her own mistress, responsible for her actions, equipped at all points to meet the chances and dangers of her life.

So she waited, argued with herself, and counted the days.

Meantime her conduct towards the Twins inspired these young men with mingled feelings of uncertainty and pleasure. She made their breakfast, was considerate in the morning, and did not ask them to talk. When the little dialogue, mentioned in an early chapter, was finished, she would herself pick out a flower—there were always flowers on the table, in deference to their artistic tastes—for their buttonholes, and despatch them with a smile.

That was very satisfactory.

At dinner too she would turn from one to the other while they discoursed sublimely on Art in its higher aspects. They took it for admiration. It was in reality curiosity to know what they meant.

After dinner she would too often confine her conversation to Joseph. On these occasions the brethren would moodily disappear, and retire to their own den, where they lit pipes and smoked in silence.

In point of fact they were as vain as a brace of peacocks, and as jealous as a domestic pet, if attention were shown by the young lady to any but themselves.

Cæsar, it may be observed, quickly learned to distinguish between the habits of Phillis and those of his masters. He never now offered to take the former into a public-house, while he ostentatiously, so to speak, paraded his knowledge of the adjacent bars when convoying the Twins.

One afternoon Phillis took it into her head to carry up tea to the Twins herself.

Cornelius was, as usual, sound asleep in an easy-chair, his head half resting upon one hand, and his pale cheek lit up with a sweet and childlike smile—he was dreaming of vintage wines. He looked sweetly poetical, and it was a thousand pities that his nose was so red. On the table lay his blotting-pad, and on it, clean and spotless, was the book destined to receive his epic poem.

Phillis touched the Divine Bard lightly on the shoulder.

He thought it was Jane; stretched, yawned, relapsed, and then awoke, fretful, like a child of five months.

'Give me the tea,' he grumbled. 'Too sweet again, I daresay, like yesterday.'

'No sugar at all in it, Mr. Cornelius.'

He sprang into consciousness at the voice.

'My dear Miss Fleming! Is it really you? You have condescended to visit the Workshop, and you find the Labourer asleep. I feel like a sentinel found slumbering at his post. Pray do not think—it is an accident quite novel to me—the exhaustion of continuous effort, I suppose.'

She looked about the room.

'I see books; I see a table; I see a blotting-pad; and—' She actually, to the Poet's horror, turned over the leaves of the stitched book, with Humphrey's ornamental title-page. 'Not a word written. Where is your work, Mr. Cornelius?'

'I work at poesy. That book, Miss Fleming, is for the reception of my great epic when it is completed. *Non omnis moriar*. There will be found in that blank book the structure of a lifetime. I shall live by a single work, like Homer.'

'What is it all about?' asked Phillis. She set the tea on the table and sat down, looking up at the

Poet, who rose from his easy-chair and made answer, walking up and down the room :

'It is called the *Upheaving of Ælfred*. In the darkest moments of Ælfred's life, while he is hiding amid the Somersetshire morasses, comes the Spirit of his Career, and guides him in a vision step by step to his crowning triumphs. Episodes are introduced. That of the swineherd and the milkmaid is a delicate pastoral, which I hope will stand side by side with the Daphnis and Chloe. When it is finished, would you like me to read you a few cantos?'

'No, thank you very much,' said Phillis. 'I think I know all that I want to know about Alfred. Disguised as a neatherd, he took refuge in Athelney, where one day, being set to bake some cakes by the woman of the cottage, he became so absorbed in his own meditations that— I never thought it a very interesting story.'

'The loves of the swineherd and the milkmaid—' the Poet began.

'Yes,' Phillis interrupted, unfeelingly. 'But I hardly think I care much for swineherds. And if I had been Alfred I should have liked the stupid story about the cakes forgotton. Can't you write me some words for music, Mr. Cornelius? Do, and I will sing them to something or other. Or write some

verses on subjects that people care to hear about, as Wordsworth did. My guardian used to read Wordsworth to me.'

'Wordsworth could not write a real epic,' said Cornelius.

'Could he not? Perhaps he preferred writing other things. Now I must carry Mr. Humphrey his tea. Good-bye, Mr. Cornelius; and do not go to sleep again.'

Humphrey too was asleep on his sofa. Raffaelle himself could not have seemed a more ideal painter. The very lights of the afternoon harmonised with the purple hue of his velvet coat, the soft brown silkiness of his beard, and his high pale forehead. Like his brother, Humphrey spoiled the artistic effect by that unlucky redness of the nose.

The same awakening was performed.

'I have just found your brother,' said Phillis, 'at work on Poetry.'

'Noble fellow, Cornelius!' murmured the Artist. 'Always at it. Always with nose to the grindstone. He will overdo it some day.'

'I hope not,' said Phillis, with a gleam in her eye. 'I sincerely hope not. Perhaps he is stronger than he looks. And what are you doing, Mr. Humphrey?'

'You found me asleep. The bow stretched too long must snap or be unbent.'

'Yes,' said Phillis; 'you were exhausted with work.'

'My great picture—no, it is not on the canvas,' for Philis was looking at the bare easel.

'Where is it, then? Do show it to me.'

'When the groups are complete I will let you criticise them. It may be that I shall learn something from an artless and unconventional nature like your own.'

'Thank you,' said Phillis. 'That is a compliment, I am sure. What is the subject of the picture?'

'It is the "Birth of the Renaissance." An allegorical picture. There will be two hundred and twenty-three figures in the composition.'

'The "Birth of the Renaissance,"' Phillis mused. 'I think I know all about that. "On the taking of Constantinople in the year 1433, the dispersed Greeks made their way to the kingdoms of the West, carrying with them Byzantine learning and culture. Italy became the chosen home of these exiles. The almost simultaneous invention of printing, coupled with an outburst of genius in painting and poetry, and a new-born thirst for classical knowledge, made up what is known by the name of the

Renaissance." That is what my guardian told me one night. I think that I do not want to see any picture on that subject. Sit down now and draw me a girl's face.'

He shook his head.

'Art cannot be forced,' he replied.

'Mr. Humphrey,'—her eyes began to twinkle,—'when you have time—I should not like to force your Art, but when you have time—paint me a little group: yourself, Mr. Cornelius, and Cæsar in the morning walk. You may choose for the moment of illustration either your going into or your coming out of the Carnarvon Arms; when you intend to have or when you have had your little whack.'

She laughed and ran away.

Humphrey sat upright, and gazed at the door through which she fled. Then he looked round helplessly for his brother, who was not there.

'Little whack!' he murmured. 'Where did she learn the phrase? And how does she know that—Cæsar could not have told her.'

He was very sad all the evening, and opened his heart to his brother when they sought the Studio at nine, an hour earlier than usual.

'I wish she had not come,' he said; 'she makes unpleasant remarks.'

'She does; she laughed at my epic to-day.' The Poet, who sat in a dressing-gown, drew the cord tighter round his waist, and tossed up his head with a gesture of indignation.

'And she laughed at my picture.'

'She is dangerous, Humphrey.'

'She watches people when they go for a morning walk, Cornelius, and makes allusion to the Carnarvon Arms and to afternoon naps.'

'If, Humphrey, we have once or twice been obliged to go to the Carnarvon Arms—'

'Or have been surprised into an afternoon nap, Cornelius—'

'That is no reason why we should be ashamed to have the subjects mentioned. I should hope that this young lady would not speak of Us—of You, brother Humphrey, and of Myself—save with reverence.'

'She has no reverence, brother Cornelius.'

'Jane certainly tells me,' said the Poet, 'that a short time ago she brought Mr. Ronald Dunquerque, then a complete stranger, to my room, when I happened by the rarest accident to be asleep, and showed me to him.'

'If one could hope that she was actuated only by respect! But no, I hardly dare to think that.

Then, I suppose, she brought her visitor to the Studio.'

'Brother Humphrey, we always do the same thing at the same time.'

'*Mutatis mutandis*, my dear Cornelius. I design, you write; I group, you clothe your conceptions in undying words. Perhaps we both shall live. It was on the same day that she drew the sketch of me asleep.' Humphrey's mind was still running on the want of respect. 'Here it is.'

'*Forsitan hoc nomen nostrum miscebitur illis*,' resumed the Poet, looking at the sketch. 'The child has a wonderful gift at catching a likeness. If it were not for the annoyance one might feel pleased. The girl is young and pretty. If our years are double what they should be, our hearts are half our years.'

'They are. We cannot be angry with her.'

'Impossible.'

'Dear little Phillis'—she was a good inch taller than either of the Twins, who, indeed, were exactly the same height, and it was five feet four—'she is charming in spite, perhaps on account, of her faults. Her property is in the Funds, you said, Cornelius?'

'Three-per-cents. Fifty thousand pounds—fifteen hundred a year; which is about half what Joseph

pays income-tax upon. A pleasant income, brother Humphrey.'

'Yes, I daresay.' Humphrey tossed the question of money aside. 'You and I, Cornelius, are among the few who care nothing about three-per-cents. What is money to us? what have we to do with incomes? Art, glorious Art, brother, is our mistress. She pays us, not in sordid gold, but in smiles, in gleams of a heaven not to be reached by the common herd, in skies of a radiance visible only to the votary's eye.'

Cornelius sighed response. It was thus that the brothers kept up the sacred flame of artistic enthusiasm. Pity that they were compelled to spend their working hours in subjection to sleep instead of Art. Our actions and our principles are so often at variance that their case is not uncommon.

Then they had their first split soda; then they lit their pipes; for it was ten o'clock. Phillis was gone to bed; Joseph was in his own room; the fire was bright and the hearth clean. The Twins sat at opposite sides, with the 'materials' on a chess-table between them, and prepared to make the usual night of it.

'Cornelius,' said Humphrey, 'Joseph is greatly changed since she came.'

The Poet sat up and leaned forward, with a nod signifying concurrence.

'He is, Humphrey; now you mention it, he is. And you think—'

'I am afraid, Cornelius, that Joseph, a most thoughtful man in general, and quite awake to the responsibilities of his position—'

'It is not every younger son, brother Humphrey, who has two men like ourselves to maintain in a befitting manner. Posterity will reward him.'

'Quite so. But I fear, brother Cornelius, that Joseph has thought of changing his condition in life.'

Cornelius turned pale.

'He has her to breakfast with him; she walks to the office with him; she makes him talk at dinner. Joseph never used to talk with us. He sits in the drawing-room after dinner. He used to go straight to his own room.'

'This is grave,' said the Poet. 'You must not, my dear Humphrey, have the gorgeous colouring and noble execution of your groups spoiled by the sordid cares of life. If Joseph marries, you and I would be thrown upon the streets, so to speak. What is two hundred a year?'

'Nor must you, my dear brother, have the delicate

fancies of your brain shaken up and clouded by mean and petty anxieties.'

'Humphrey,' said the Poet, 'come to me in half an hour in the Workshop. This is a time for Action.'

It was only half-past ten, and the night was but just begun. He buttoned his dressing-gown across his chest, tightened the cord, and strode solemnly out of the room. The Painter heard his foot descend the stairs.

'Excellent Cornelius,' he murmured, lighting his second pipe; 'he lives but for others.'

Joseph was sitting as usual before a pile of papers. It was quite true that Phillis was brightening up the life of this hard-working lawyer. His early breakfast was a time of pleasure; his walk to the office was not a solitary one; he looked forward to dinner; and he found the evenings tolerable. Somehow, Joseph Jagenal had never known any of the little *agrémens* of life. From bed to desk, from desk to bed, save when a dinner-party became a necessity, had been his life from the day his articles were signed.

'You, Cornelius?' He looked up from his work, and laid down his pen. 'This is unexpected.'

'I am glad to find you, as usual, at work, Joseph. We are a hard-working family. You with law-

books; poor Humphrey and I with— But never mind.'

He sighed and sat down.

'Why poor Humphrey?'

'Joseph, we were happy before this young lady came.'

'What has Phillis done? Why, we were then old fogies, with our bachelor ways; and she has roused us up a little. And again, why poor Humphrey?'

'We were settled down in a quiet stream of labour, thinking that there would be no change. I see a great change coming over us now.'

'What change?'

'Joseph, if it were not for Humphrey I should rejoice. I should say, "Take her; be happy in your own way." For me, I only sing of love. I might perhaps sing as well in a garret and on a crust of bread; therefore it matters nothing. It is for Humphrey that I feel. How can that delicately-organised creature, to whom warmth, comfort, and ease are as necessary as sunshine to the flower, face the outer world? For his sake I ask you, Joseph, to reconsider your project, and pause before you commit yourself.'

Joseph was accustomed to this kind of estimate

which one Twin invariably made of the other; but the reason for making it staggered him. He actually blushed. Being forty years of age, a bachelor, and a lawyer—on all these grounds presumably acquainted with the world and with the sex—he blushed on being accused of nothing more than a mere tendency in the direction of marriage.

'This is the strangest whim,' he said. 'Why, Cornelius, I am as likely to marry Phillis Fleming as I am to send Humphrey into the cold. Dismiss the thought at once, and let the matter be mentioned no more. Good-night, Cornelius.'

He turned to his papers again with the look of one who wishes to be alone. These Twins were a great pride to him, but he could not help sometimes feeling the slightest possible annoyance that they were not as other men. Still they were his charge, and in their future glory his own name would play an honourable part.

'Good-night, Cornelius. It is good of you to think of Humphrey first. I shall not marry—either the child Phillis Fleming or any other woman.'

'Good-night, my dear Joseph. You have relieved my mind of a great anxiety. Good-night.'

Five minutes afterwards the door opened again.

Joseph looked round impatiently.

This time it was Humphrey. The light shone picturesquely on his great brown beard, so carefully trimmed and brushed; on the velvet jacket, in the pockets of which were his hands; and on his soft large limpid eyes, so full of unutterable artistic perception, such lustrous passion for colour and for form.

'Well, Humphrey!' Joseph exclaimed, with more sharpness than he was wont to display to his brothers. 'Are you come here on the same wise errand as Cornelius?'

'Has Cornelius been with you?' asked the Painter artlessly. 'What did Cornelius come to you for? Poor fellow! he is not ill, I trust. I thought he took very little dinner to-day.'

'Tut, tut! Don't you know why he came here?'

'Certainly not, brother Joseph.' This was of course strictly true, because Cornelius had not told him. Guesses are not evidence. 'And it hardly matters, does it?' he asked, with a sweet smile. 'For myself, I come because I have a thing to say.'

'Well? Come, Humphrey, don't beat about the bush.'

'It is about Miss—Fleming.'

'Ah!'

'You guess already what I have to say, my dear

Joseph. It is this: I have watched the birth and growth of your passion for this young lady. In some respects I am not surprised. She is certainly piquante as well as pretty. But, my dear Joseph, there is Cornelius.'

Joseph beat the tattoo on his chair.

'Humphrey,' he groaned, 'I know all Cornelius's virtues.'

'But not the fragile nature of his beautifully subtle brain. That, Joseph, I alone know. I tremble to think what would become of that—that *delicia musarum*, were he to be deprived of the little luxuries which are to him necessities. A poet's brain, Joseph, is not a thing lightly to be dealt with.'

Joseph was touched at this appeal.

'You are really, Humphrey, the most tender-hearted pair of creatures I ever saw. Would that all the world were like you! Take my assurance, if that will comfort you, that I have no thought whatever of marrying Phillis Fleming.'

'Joseph,'—Humphrey grasped his hand,—'this is indeed a sacrifice.'

'Not at all,' returned Joseph sharply. 'Sacrifice? Nonsense! And please remember, Humphrey, that I am acting as the young lady's guardian; that she is an heiress; that she is intrusted to me; and

that it would be an unworthy breach of trust if I were even to think of such a thing. Besides which I have a letter from Mr. Lawrence Colquhoun, who is coming home immediately. It is not at all likely that the young lady will remain longer under my charge. Good-night, Humphrey.'

'I had a thing to say to Joseph,' said Humphrey, going up to the Workshop, 'and I said it.'

'I too had a thing to say,' said the Poet, 'and I said it.'

'Cornelius, you are the most unselfish creature in the world.'

'Humphrey, you are—I have always maintained it—too thoughtful, much too thoughtful, for others. Joseph will not marry.'

'I know it; and my mind is relieved. Brother, shall we split another soda? It is only eleven.'

Joseph took up his paper. He neither smoked nor drank brandy-and-soda, finding in his work occupation which left him no time for either. To-night, however, he could not bring his mind to bear upon the words before him.

He to marry? And to marry Phillis? The thought was new and startling. He put it from him; but it came back. And why not? he asked himself.

Why should not he, as well as the rest of mankind, have his share of love and beauty? To be sure, it would be a breach of confidence, as he told Humphrey. But Colquhoun was coming: he was a young man—his own age—only forty; he would not care to have a girl to look after; he would—again he put the thought behind him.

But all night long Joseph Jagenal dreamed a strange dream, in which soft voices whispered things in his ears, and he thrilled in his sleep at the rustle of a woman's dress. He could not see her face,—dreams are always so absurdly imperfect,—but he recognised her figure, and it was that of Phillis Fleming.

CHAPTER XIII.

'She never yet was foolish that was fair.'

The days sped on; but each day, as it vanished, made Phillis's heart sadder, because it brought her guardian nearer, and the second great change in her life, she thought, was inevitable. Think of a girl, brought up a cloistered nun, finding her liberty for a few short weeks, and then ordered back to her white-washed cell. Phillis's feelings as regards Lawrence Colquhoun's return were coloured by this fear. It seemed as if, argument and probability notwithstanding, she might be suddenly and peremptorily carried back to prison, without the consolations of a maid, because Antoinette, as we know, would refuse to accompany her, or the kindly society of poor old Abraham Dyson, now lying in a synonymous bosom.

A short three weeks since her departure from Highgate; a short six weeks since Mr. Dyson's death; and the world was all so different. She looked back on herself, with her old ideas, contemptuously. 'Poor Phillis!' she thought, 'she knew so

little.' And as happens to every one of us, in every successive stage of life, she seemed to herself now to know everything. Life without the sublime conceit of being uplifted, by reason of superior inward light and greater outward experience, above other men, would be but a poor thing. Phillis thought she had the Key to Universal Knowledge, and that she was on the high-road to make that part of her life which should begin in two years' time easy, happy, and clear of pitfalls. From the Archbishop of Canterbury to Joe the crossing-sweeper, we all think in exactly the same way. And when the ages bring experience, and experience does not blot out memory, we recall our old selves with a kind of shame—wonder that we did not drop into the snare, and perish miserably; and presently fall to thanking God that we are rid of a Fool.

A fortnight. Phillis counted the days, and drew a historical record of every one. Jack came three times: once after Mrs. Cassilis's dinner; once when he took her to the Tower of London; and once—I have been obliged to omit this third visit—when he sat for his portrait, and Phillis drew him full length, leaning against the mantelshelf, with his hands in his pockets—not a graceful attitude, but an easy one, and new to Phillis, who thought it characteristic.

She caught Jack's cheerful spirit too, and fixed it by a touch in the gleam of his eye. Mrs. Cassilis came four times, and on each occasion took the girl for a drive, bought something for her, and sent the bill to Joseph Jagenal. On each occasion, also, she asked particularly for Lawrence Colquhoun. There were the little events with the Twins which we have recorded; and there were walks with Cæsar about the square. Once Joseph Jagenal took her to a picture-gallery, where she wanted to stay and copy everything; it was her first introduction to the higher Art, and she was half delighted, half confused. If Art critics were not such humbugs, and did not pretend to feel what they do not, they might help the world to a better understanding of the glories of painters. As it is, they are the only people, except preachers, to whom unreal gush is allowed by gods and men. After all, as no Art critic of the modern unintelligible gush-and-conceit school can paint or draw, perhaps if they were not to gush and pile up Alpine heaps of words they would be found out for shallow wind-bags. The ideal critic in Art is the great Master who sits above the fear of rivalry or the imputation of envy; in Literature it is the great writer from whom praise is honour and dispraise the admonition of a teacher; in the Drama, the man who

himself has moved the House with his words, and can afford to look on a new rising playwright with kindliness.

Phillis in the Art Gallery was the next best critic to the calm and impartial Master. She was herself artist enough to understand the difficulties of art; she had that intense and real feeling for form and colour which Humphrey Jagenal affected; and her taste in Art was good enough to overmaster her sympathy with the subject. Some people are ready to weep at a tragical subject, however coarse the daub, just as they weep at the fustian of an Adelphi melodrama; Phillis was ready to weep when the treatment and the subject together were worthy of her tears. It seems as if she must have had her nature chilled; but it is not so.

Time, which ought to be represented as a locomotive engine, moved on, and brought Lawrence Colquhoun at length to London. He went first to Joseph Jagenal's office, and heard that his ward was in safe-keeping with that very safe solicitor.

'It was difficult,' Joseph explained, 'to know what to do. After the funeral of Mr. Dyson, she was left alone in the place, with no more responsible person than a housekeeper. So, as soon as the arrangement could be made, I brought her to my own house.

Three old bachelors might safely, I thought, be trusted with the protection of a young lady.'

'I am much obliged to you,' said Colquhoun. 'You have removed a great weight off my mind. What sort of a girl is she?'

Joseph began to describe her. As he proceeded he warmed with his subject, and delineated a young lady of such passing charms of person and mind that Colquhoun was terrified.

'My dear Jagenal, if you were not such a steady old file, I should think you were in love with her.'

'My love-days are over,' said the man of conveyances. 'That is, I never had any. But you will find Phillis Fleming everything that you can desire. Except, of course,' he added, 'in respect to her education. It certainly *is* awkward that she does not know how to read.'

'Not know how to read?'

* * * * * *

'And so, you see,' said the lawyer, completing the story we know already, 'Mr. Dyson's property will go into Chancery, because Phillis Fleming has never learned to read, and because we cannot find that chapter on the Coping-stone.'

'Hang the Coping-stone!' ejaculated Colquhoun. 'I think I will go and see her at once. Will you

let me dine with you to-night? And will you add to my obligations by letting her stay on with you till I can arrange something for her.'

'What do you think of doing?'

'I hardly know. I thought, on the voyage, that I would do something in the very superior lady-companion way for her. To tell the truth, I thought it was a considerable bore—the whole thing. But she seems very different from what I expected, and perhaps I could ask my cousin, Mrs. L'Estrange, to take her into her own house for a time. Poor old Dyson! It is twelve years ago since I saw him last, soon after he took over the child. I remember her then, a solemn little thing, with big eyes, who behaved prettily. She held up her mouth to be kissed when she went to bed, but I suppose she won't do that now.'

'You can hardly expect it, I think,' said Joseph.

'Abraham Dyson talked all the evening about his grand principles of Female Education. I was not interested, except that I felt sorry for the poor child who was to be an experiment. Perhaps I ought to have interfered as one of her trustees. I left the whole thing to him, you see, and did not even inquire after her welfare.'

'You two were, by some curious error of judgment, as I take it, left discretionary trustees. As he

is dead, you have now the care of Miss Fleming's fifty thousand pounds. Mr. Dyson left it in the funds, where he found it. As your legal adviser, Mr. Colquhoun, I strongly recommend you to do the same. She will be entitled to the control and management of it on coming of age, but it is to be settled on herself when she marries. There is no stipulation as to trustees' consent. So that you only have the responsibility of the young lady and her fortune for two years.'

It was twelve o'clock in the day. Colquhoun left the office, and made his way in the direction of Carnarvon-square.

As he ascended the steps of Number Fifteen, the door opened and two young men appeared. One was dressed in a short frock, with a flower in his button-hole; the other had on a velvet coat, and also had a flower: one was shaven; the other wore a long and silky beard. Both had pale faces and red noses. As they looked at the stranger and passed him down the steps, Colquhoun saw that they were not so young as they seemed to be; there were crowsfeet round the eyes; and their step had lost a little of its youthful buoyancy. He wondered who they were, and sent in his card to Miss Fleming.

He was come then, this new guardian. Phillis

could not read the card, but Jane, the maid, told her his name.

He was come; and the second revolution was about to begin. Instinctively Phillis's first thought was that there would be no more walks with Jack Dunquerque. Why she felt so it would be hard to explain, but she did.

She stood up to welcome him.

She saw a handsome young-looking man, with blue eyes, clear red and white complexion, regular features, a brown beard, and a curious look of laziness in his eyes. They were eyes which showed a repressed power of animation. They lit up at sight of his ward, but not much.

He saw a girl of nineteen, tall, slight, and shapely; a girl of fine physique; a girl whose eyes, like her hair, were brown; the former were large and full, but not with the fulness of short-sight; the latter was abundant, and was tossed up in the simplest fashion, which is also the most graceful. Lawrence the lazy felt his pulse quicken a little as this fair creature advanced, with perfect grace and self-possession, to greet him. He noticed that her dress was perfect, that her hands were small and delicate, and that her head was shaped, save for the forehead, which was low and broad, like that of

some Greek statue. The Greeks knew the perfect shape of the head, but they made the forehead too narrow. If you think of it, you will find that the Venus of Milo would have been more divine still had her brows been but a little broader.

'My ward?' he said. 'Let us make acquaintance, and try to like each other. I am your new guardian.'

Phillis looked at him frankly and curiously, letting her hand rest in his.

'When I saw you last—it was twelve years ago—you were a little maid of seven. Do you remember?'

'I think I do; but I am not quite sure. Are you really my guardian?'

'I am indeed. Do I not look like one? To be sure, it is my first appearance in the character.'

She shook her head.

'Mr. Dyson was so old,' she said, 'that I suppose I grew to think all guardians old men.'

'I am only getting old,' he sighed. 'It is not nice to feel yourself going to get old. Wait twenty years, and you will begin to feel the same perhaps. But though I am thirty years younger than Mr. Dyson, I will try to treat you exactly as he did.'

Phillis's face fell, and she drew away her hand sharply.

'O!' she cried. 'But I am afraid that will not do any more.'

'Why, Phillis—I may call you Phillis since I am your guardian, may I not?—did he treat you badly? Why did you not write to me?'

'I did not write, Mr. Colquhoun—if you call me Phillis, I ought to call you Lawrence, ought I not, because you are not old?—I did not write because dear old Mr. Dyson treated me very kindly, and because you were away and never came to see me, and because I—I never learned to write.'

By this time Phillis had learned to feel a little shame at not being able to write.

'Besides,' she went on, 'he was a dear old man, and I loved him. But you see, Lawrence, he had his views—Joseph Jagenal calls them crotchets—and he never let me go outside the house. Now I am free I do not like to think of being a prisoner again. If you try to lock me up, I am afraid I shall break the bars and run away.'

'You shall not be a prisoner, Phillis. That is quite certain. We shall find something better than that for you. But it cannot be very lively, in this big house, all by yourself.'

'Not very lively; but I am quite happy here.'

'Most young ladies read novels to pass away the time.'

'I know, poor things.' Phillis looked unutterable sympathy. 'Mr. Dyson used to say that the sympathies which could not be quickened by history were so dull that fiction was thrown away upon them.'

'Did you never—I mean, did he never read you novels?'

She shook her head.

'He said that my imagination was quite powerful enough to be a good servant, and he did not wish it to become my master. And then there was something else, about wanting the experience of life necessary to appreciate fiction.'

'Abraham Dyson was a wise man, Phillis. But what do you do all day?'

'I draw; I talk to my maid Antoinette; I give the Twins their breakfast—'

'Those were the Twins—Mr. Jagenal's elder brothers—whom I met on the steps, I suppose? I have heard of them. *Après*, Phillis?'

'I play and sing to myself; I go out for a walk in the garden of the square; I go to Mr. Jagenal's office, and walk home with him; and I look after my wardrobe. Then I sit and think of what I have

seen and heard—put it all away in my memory, or I repeat to myself over again some of the poetry which I learned at Highgate.'

'And you know no young ladies?'

'No; I wish I did. I am curious to talk to young ladies—quite young ladies, you know, of my own age. I want to compare myself with them, and find out my faults. You will tell me my faults, Lawrence, will you?'

'I don't quite think I can promise that, Phillis. You see, you might retaliate; and if you once begin telling me my faults, there would be no end.'

'O, I am sorry!' Phillis looked curiously at her guardian for some outward sign or token of the old Adam. But she saw none. 'Perhaps I shall find them out some time, and then I will tell you.'

'Heaven forbid!' he said, laughing. 'Now, Phillis, I have been asked to dine here, and I am going to be at your service all day. It is only one o'clock. What shall we do, and where shall we go?'

'Anywhere,' she replied, 'anywhere. Take me into the crowded streets, and let me look at the people and the shops. I like that best of anything. But stay and have luncheon here first.'

They had luncheon. Colquhoun confessed to himself that this was a young lady calculated to do

him the greatest credit. She acted hostess with a a certain dignity which sat curiously on so young a girl, and which she had learned from presiding at many a luncheon in Mr. Dyson's old age among his old friends, when her guardian had become too infirm to take the head of his own table. There was, it is true, something wanting. Colquhoun's practised eye detected that at once. Phillis was easy, graceful, and natural. But she had not—the man of the world noticed what Jack Dunquerque failed to observe—she had not the unmistakable stamp of social tone which can only come by practice and time. The elements, however, were there before him; his ward was a diamond which wanted but a little polish to make her a gem of the first water.

After luncheon they talked again; this time with a little more freedom. Colquhoun told her all he knew of the father who was but a dim and distant memory to her. 'You have his eyes,' he said, 'and you have his mouth. I should know you for his daughter.' He told her how fond this straight rider, this Nimrod of the hunting-field, had been of his little Phillis; how one evening after mess he told Colquhoun that he had made a will, and appointed him, Lawrence, with Abraham Dyson, the trustees of his little girl.

'I have been a poor trustee, Phillis,' Lawrence concluded. 'But I was certain that you were in good hands, and I let things alone. Now that I have to act in earnest, you must regard me as your friend and adviser.'

They had such a long talk that it was past four when they went out for their walk. Phillis was thoughtful and serious, thinking of the father whom she lost so early. Somehow she had forgotten, at Highgate, that she once had a father. And the word mother had no meaning for her.

Outside the house Lawrence looked at his companion critically.

'Am I properly dressed?' she asked, with a smile, because she knew that she was perfectly dressed.

At all events, Lawrence thought he would have no occasion to be ashamed of his companion.

'Let me look again, Phillis. I should like to give you a little better brooch than the one you have put on.'

'My poor old brooch! I cannot give up my old friend, Lawrence.'

She dropped quite easily into his Christian name, and hesitated no more over it than she did with Jack Dunquerque.

He took her into a jeweller's shop, and bought her a few trinkets.

'There, Phillis, you can add those to your jewel-box.'

'I have no jewels.'

'No jewels? Where are your mother's?'

'I believe they are all in the Bank, locked up. Perhaps they are with my money.'

Phillis's idea of her fifty thousand pounds was, that the money was all in sovereigns, packed away in a box and put into a bank.

'Well, I think you ought to have your jewels out, at any rate. Did Mr. Dyson give you any money to spend?'

'No; and if he had I could not have spent it, because I never went outside the house. Lawrence, give me some money, and let me buy something all by myself.'

He bought her a purse, and filled it with two or three sovereigns and a handful of silver.

'Now you are rich, Phillis. What will you buy?'

'Pictures, I think.'

In all this great exhibition of glorious and beautiful objects there was only one thing which Phillis wished to buy—pictures.

'Well, let us buy some photographs.'

They were walking down Oxford-street, and presently they came to a photograph-shop. Proud of her newly-acquired wealth, Phillis selected about twenty of the largest and most expensive. Colquhoun observed that her taste was good, and that she chose the best subjects. When she had all that she liked, together with one or two which she bought for Jack, with a secret joy surpassing that of buying for herself, she opened her purse and began to wonder how she was to pay.

'Do you think your slender purse will buy all these views?' Colquhoun asked. 'Put it up, Phillis, and keep it for another time. Let me give you these photographs.'

'But you said I should buy something.' The words and action were so childish that Lawrence felt a sort of pity for her. Not to know how to spend money seemed to lazy Lawrence, who had done nothing else all his life, a state of mind really deplorable. It would mean in his own case absolute deprivation of the power of procuring pleasure, either for himself or for any one else.

'Poor little nun! Not to know even the value of money.'

'But I do. A sovereign is twenty shillings, and a shilling is twelve pence.'

'That is certainly true. Now you shall show that you know the value of money. There is a beggar. He is going to tell us that he is hungry; he will probably add that he has a wife and twelve children, all under the age of three, in his humble home, and that none of them have tasted food for a week. What will you give him?'

Phillis paused. How should she relieve so much distress? By this time they were close to the beggar. He was a picturesque rogue in rags and tatters and bare feet. Though it was a warm day he shivered. In his hand he held a single box of lights. But the fellow was young, well fed, and lusty. Lawrence Colquhoun halted on the pavement, and looked at him attentively.

'This man,' he explained to Phillis, 'can get for a penny a small loaf; twopence will buy him a glass of ale; sixpence a dinner; for ten shillings he could get a suit of working clothes—which he does not want, because he has no intention of doing any work at all; a sovereign would lodge and feed him for a fortnight, if he did not drink.'

'I should give him a sovereign,' said Phillis. 'Then he would be happy for a week.'

'Bless your ladyship,' murmured the beggar. 'I would get work, Gawd knows, if I could.'

'I remember this fellow,' said Colquhoun, 'for six years. He is a sturdy rogue. Best give nothing to him at all. Come on, Phillis. We must look for a more promising subject.'

'Poor fellow!' said Phillis, closing her purse.

They passed on, and the beggar-man cursed audibly. I believe it is Mr. Tupper, in his *Proverbial Philosophy*, who explains that what a beggar most wants, to make him feel happier, is sympathy. Now that was just what Phillis gave, and the beggar-man only swore.

Colquhoun laughed.

'You may keep your pity, Phillis, for some one who deserves it better. Now let us take a cab and go to the Park. It is four years since I saw the Park.'

It was five o'clock. The Park was fuller than when he saw it last. It grows more crowded year after year, as the upward pressure of an enriched multitude makes itself felt more and more. There was the usual throng about the gates of those who come to look for great people, and like to tell whom they recognised, and who were pointed out to them. There were the pedestrians on either side the road; civilians after office hours; bankers and brokers from the City; men up from Aldershot; busy men hasten-

ing home; loungers leaning on the rails; curious colonials gazing at the carriages; Frenchmen trying to think that Hyde Park cannot compare with the Bois de Boulogne; Germans mindful of their mighty army, their great sprawling Berlin, the gap of a century between English prosperity and Teutonic militarism, and as envious as philosophy permits; Americans owning that New York, though its women are lovelier, has nothing to show beside the Park at five on a spring afternoon,—all the bright familiar scene which Colquhoun remembered so well.

'Four years since I saw it last,' he repeated to the girl. 'I suppose there will be none of the faces whom I used to know.'

He was wrong. The first man who greeted him was his old Colonel. Then he came across a man he had known in India. Then one whom he had last seen, a war-correspondent, inside Metz. Then a man with whom he once visited Cashmere. He shook hands with one, nodded to another, and made appointments with all at his club. And as each passed, he told something about him to his ward.

'That is my old Colonel—your father's brother-officer. The most gallant fellow who ever commanded a regiment. As soon as you are settled, I should like to bring him to see you. That is Macnamara of

the *London Herald*—a man you can't get except in England. That is Lord Blandish; we were together up-country in India. He wrote a book about his adventures in Cashmere. I did not.'

It was a new world to Phillis. All these carriages; these people; this crowd—who were they?

'They are not like the faces I see in the streets,' she said.

'No. Those are faces of men who work for bread. These are mostly of men who work not at all, or they work for honour. There are two or three classes of mankind, you know, Phillis.'

'Servants and masters?'

'Not quite. You belong to the class of those who need not work—this class. Your father knew all these people. It is a happy world in its way—in its way,' he repeated, thinking of certain shipwrecks he had known. 'Perhaps it is better to *have* to work. I do not know. Phillis, who—' He was going to ask who was bowing to her, when he turned pale, and stopped suddenly. In the carriage which was passing within a foot of where they stood was a lady whom he knew—Mrs. Cassilis. He took off his hat, and Mrs. Cassilis stopped the carriage and held out her hand.

'How do you do, Phillis dear? Mr. Colquhoun, I am glad to see you back again. Come as soon as you

can and see me. If you can spare an afternoon as soon as you are settled, give it to me—for auld lang syne.'

The last words were whispered. Her lips trembled, and her hand shook as she spoke. And Lawrence's face was hard. He took off his hat and drew back; Phillis did not hear what he said. But Mrs. Cassilis drove on, and left the Park immediately.

'Mrs. Cassilis trembled when she spoke to you, Lawrence.' It was exactly what a girl of six would have said.

'Did she, Phillis? She was cold perhaps. Or perhaps she was pleased to see old friends again. So you know her?'

'Yes. I have dined at her house; and I have been shopping with her. She does not like me, I know; but she is kind. She has spoken to me about you.'

'So you know Mrs. Cassilis?' he repeated. 'She does not look as if she had any trouble on her mind, does she? The smooth brow of a clear conscience—Phillis, if you have had enough of the Park, I think it is almost time to drive you home.'

Lawrence Colquhoun dined at Carnarvon-square. The Twins dined at their club; so that they had the evening to themselves, and could talk.

'I have made up my mind,' Lawrence said, 'to ask my cousin to take charge of you, Phillis. Agatha L'Estrange is the kindest creature in the world. Will you try to like her if she consents?'

'Yes, I will try. But suppose she does not like me?'

'Everybody likes you, Miss Fleming,' said Joseph.

'She is sure to like you,' said Lawrence. 'And I will come over often and see you; we will ride together if you like. And if you would like to have any masters or lessons in anything—'

'I think I should like to learn reading,' Phillis remarked meditatively. 'Mr. Abraham Dyson used to say'—she held up her finger, and imitated the manner and fidgety dogmatism of an old man—'"Reading breeds a restless curiosity, and engenders an irreverent spirit of carping criticism Any jackanapes who can read thinks himself qualified to judge the affairs of the nation. Reading indeed!' But I think I *should* like after all to do what everybody else can do.'

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582